



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Sunshine between showers

(R45P) 40p

Essay

John Lyttle on Madonna and child page 18

Education+

TOMORROW: 28-page pull-out packed with higher education appointments

The Tabloid

Bridget Jones: bad hair day

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Does our whole view of England come from Rubens?



England's assumed supremacy in landscape painting will be challenged by a new exhibition of Rubens. Neil McGregor, director of the National Gallery, said yesterday, David Lloyd Williams:

Rubens's view of Flanders' landscape," he said. "What we think of as a highly English genre was in fact international."

Rubens which inspired Constable's *The Hay-Wain*. The similarities are enormous," he added. Last night the Flemish Minister of Culture, who was enraptured with the exhibition, presented the National Gallery with £100,000 to devote one of its soon to be

refurbished rooms to Flemish art - an unprecedented event for the London gallery. Rubens's *Landscapes* is part of the series *Making and Meaning*, sponsored by Esso at the National Gallery's Salisbury Wing, until 19 January 1997.

Handgun ban in sight as MPs back parents

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government was warned it would be defeated if it fails to deliver a total ban on the private ownership of handguns today in the face of public demands for action and the real threat of being outflanked by Labour after the Dunblane massacre.

Cabinet committee chaired by John Major and the details will be announced in statements by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, and Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland. It could allow .22 calibre weapons in gun clubs but ban most other handguns.

A cross-party Commons motion, signed by two Tory MPs, Hugh Dykes and Robert Hughes, was tabled to bolster those in the Government including Mr Forsyth calling for a complete ban on all handguns, with the threat that it could be defeated if it bows to the pressure from the gun lobby.

Labour moved last night to toughen its policy and threaten a total ban on all handguns. In May, Labour said it favoured a ban with the exception of the .22 Olympic-calibre pistols.

There were differences of opinion over the practicalities of banning handguns, but Whitehall sources said last night that they had emerged in full agreement at the action to be taken.

Legislation to implement the ban on handguns will be introduced in the Queen's Speech next week. Lord Cullen was said to have taken a pragmatic approach, and has been careful to highlight the difficulties in defining handguns to be banned.

Belgium erupts in judge's defence

Catherine Butler
Assess

A surge of spontaneous public emotion swept across normally placid Belgium yesterday after the sacking of the crusading judge who led the inquiry into the country's child sex and murder scandals. This triggered strikes in cities and towns throughout the country, protests angrily directed at the state itself.

in there, some in tears, other vowing to go on hunger strike. "He was the only person we trusted. The workers have no confidence in anyone else," said union representative Hedwin De Clercq who led the march.

Minister faces debate on conduct

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

David Willetts, a Treasury minister, faces an emergency debate in the Commons today on allegations that he tried to influence a select committee inquiry into the cash-for-questions scandal.

Smith. According to a note obtained by *The Guardian* in the preparation of its defence against a now-abandoned libel action brought by Neil Hamilton, the former trade minister, Mr Willetts floated the possibility of "exploiting the good Tory majority" on the committee to ensure the issue was dealt with as quickly as possible.

QUICKLY

Hussein returns
King Hussein, with Yasser Arafat, returned to the West Bank for the first time since the Jordanian army was defeated by Israel in 1967. Page 11

Murdoch's weapon
Media mogul Rupert Murdoch is planning to use sport as a "battering ram" for the expansion of his global pay television network. Page 28

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news

When politics comes to push and shove

There is not normally a big turnout for Environment questions. Why should there be? Normally all you get is Labour whingeing about bicycles, and Tory point-scoring about how the worst performing councils are all run by Blair-people (as, of course, are the best, and the ones in the middle).

But barely had the doors opened to admit the *hoi polloi*, than MPs found themselves competing for scarce space all across the green baize. The average bench in the House sits 15 comfortably, 17 with a squeeze, and 18 in severe discomfort. But that discomfort is not shared equally. Those at the end of the row suffer dispro-



DAVID AARONOVITCH

portionately, as those close to Labour veteran, Peter Shore discovered yesterday.

Mr Shore, like the regular customer of a down-at-heel neighbourhood trattoria, has a space which Luigi or Marco magically manages in reserve for him, even should a coach party turn up unexpectedly. But yes-

terday, Mr Shore's favourite aisle spot being occupied, he made use of the simple expedient of sitting on the lap of the man who was sitting in it - David Winnick. Mr Winnick quickly realised that two elderly male members sharing the same seat was neither dignified, nor likely to reinforce the family values message, as delivered in South Africa by his leader. So he showed the man next to him, indicating that if everyone were to move up equally, then all could have a seat (albeit a small one).

So his neighbour (Peter Hardy, I think) pushed the man to his right, and one of Mr Winnick's buttocks (try not to say this too quickly) found a

mooring in between Mr Shore and Mr Hardy. But, like a rear-shunting car accident, the further away they were from Mr Winnick, the less the movement from his colleagues. By the time it reached Greville Janner, sitting in the centre of the row, all momentum had been lost.

While Mr Winnick crunched himself into a space hardly more than six inches across - his weather (usually good in his neck of the woods), the success of his electric pellet business, the University of Life (which he attended), and who would buy you a drink if he had only managed to get to a cash dispenser in time. You what? Oh, how kind, mine's a G&T. Thirsty work, this Prime-Ministering.

Facing him is the well-born Bishop of Salford, who bleeds for the neglected children and moans at the loss of communal values and ties. "Rabouring is his hand, Jesus in his heart, the people not so much, but with a sword. Two mineral waters, but he is happy."

And, when it comes to the most significant shorts

significant shorts

Care home abuse victims urged to come forward

A national appeal for children who were abused while in care in North Wales was launched yesterday by the judicial tribunal set up to investigate the abuse.

It is estimated that up to 200 or more young people alleging abuse will want to give evidence to the tribunal and 70 are already understood to have been in contact with lawyers prior.

The tribunal yesterday granted a number of people legal representation at the hearings which begin taking evidence in the new year and are expected to last for 12 months. Six former police officers will have legal representation, as well as a number of care workers.

Sir Ronald Weirhouse, chairman of the judicial tribunal, only the fourth of its kind in 30 years, told a preliminary hearing yesterday that he was inviting anyone with information to contact the tribunal via the Solicitor to the Tribunal, PO Box 13, Deeside, CF5 3ZR or by telephoning 0800 330321.

The tribunal was set up by the Welsh Secretary, Wiliam Hogg, and its task includes investigating the abuse of children in care in the former county council areas of Clwyd and Gwynedd since 1974. It will also look at whether agencies and authorities responsible for child care could have prevented abuse or detected it earlier.

Beef sales 'never likely to make full recovery'

Beef consumption in Britain is never likely to return to levels prior to the breaking of the mad cow crisis on 20 March, Douglas Hogg, the Minister for Agriculture, said yesterday.

Mr Hogg's unscripted admission at a trade lunch was the more surprising as the beef industry itself is "cautiously optimistic" that sales are returning to near-normal. It was disclosed on Monday that more than 300 schools in North Yorkshire are putting beef back on the menu.

Describing BSE as a "dark shadow" over the farming and food industry, Mr Hogg told the British Meat Manufacturers' Association: "I cannot say by how much, but I believe that there is likely to be a permanent decline in beef eating as a result of what has happened."

Beef consumption plummeted after the admission of a possible link between BSE and its human equivalent, CJD, but it is now back to within 15 per cent of normal. Consumers remain shy particularly of cheaper cuts, mince and manufactured beef products.

Stephen Goodwin

Missing girl found safe

A 10-year-old girl was being interviewed by specially trained police after disappearing for 48 hours with her family's lodger.

Ann-Marie Radbourne was reunited with her mother Alison at their home in Paignton, Devon, after being spotted near Exeter yesterday with 51-year-old Paul Husbands by two Ministry of Defence policemen.

They were walking by the side of the road about half a mile from Devon and Cornwall Police headquarters.

Mr Husbands was arrested on suspicion of abducting Ann-Marie, and was being questioned at Torquay police station.

Ann-Marie, and Mr Husbands, who had been lodging with the family for two months, vanished after saying they were setting out for a coastal walk at 11.30am on Sunday.

Retrial for man accused of robbing Salvation Army

A financial adviser accused of stealing £1.2m from the Salvation Army is to face a retrial.

A new hearing was ordered yesterday after the Southwark Crown Court jury trying Stuart Ford, 45, cleared him of two of the 23 counts of theft he had originally faced, but failed to reach verdicts on the remainder.

Mr Ford, of Finchley, north London, denies all the charges and says he always acted in the Salvation Army's best interests.

Anti-meat adverts criticised

The Vegetarian Society is criticised today by the Advertising Standards Authority for an "alarmist and denigratory" campaign against meat.

One of the advertisements showed the back view of a bull and carried the caption "If you eat burgers, here's a couple of half pounders you might recognise". It suggested that parts of the body, including testicles, feet and the rectum, were frequently found in meat products and that meat had been linked to a range of diseases. But the ASA, said use of the word "recognise" was not justified and there was no causal link between meat and disease.

The second advertisement claimed various drugs, including one linked to cancer, were widely used in rearing. The ASA ruled the advertisers had not shown the drugs were "widely used" or that there was a causal link with cancer.

Boy dies in fall from school window

A 13-year-old boy died of head injuries yesterday after falling from a third-floor window at his school in Edinburgh.

Craig McLennan, a second-year pupil, fell from the window during an art class at Currie High School in Edinburgh.

Elizabeth Maginnis, Edinburgh's education committee convenor said: "As far as we are aware it was a normal art class. The teacher went over to the cupboard to get something from it, there were some screams and the next thing the teacher knew the child was out the window. We don't know the circumstances."

A police spokeswoman said inquiries were continuing and a report would be sent to the procurator fiscal.

Albert Hall to stage 'Carmen'

The Royal Albert Hall is to stage an arena production of *Carmen* next February, the month when Eric Clapton usually performs at the venue.

Classical promoter Raymond Gubbay and the Royal Albert Hall are mounting a co-production of the opera, following their successful *La Bohème* at the same venue last year.

Eric Clapton is taking a break from his residency to go into the recording studio.

Carmen will be directed by Frank Dunlop who is currently directing Cliff Richard in a musical version of *Withering Heights*.

Mr Gubbay said yesterday that the new *Carmen* will be "extremely sexy". He also said it would be performed in English, as the amount of spoken dialogue made a foreign language production unusable for an arena performance in front of a 4,000 strong audience. Tickets prices will be kept below £40, David Lister.

Solicitors reject Law Society split

Solicitors voted overwhelmingly in a postal ballot against a proposal to split the Law Society's regulatory and trade union functions.

The proposal, promoted by Anthony Bogan of the break-away Solicitors' Association, was defeated by 14,199 votes to 8,881. Only 29.8 per cent of the 81,589 solicitors in England & Wales voted. Day Gilling, the society's president, said the proposal had now been defeated three times, in the presidential election, at the annual general meeting and in a ballot of the whole profession. "It is time to draw a line under this divisive and costly argument."

Patricia Wynn Davies

Top brass gather to watch Panzers beat a friendly retreat



Troops from the 14th Panzer Division parading yesterday with their schellenbaum (a 7ft high set of chimes) at Castle Martin in Pembrokeshire as they and their Leopard tanks prepare to leave the British Army base. Allies under Nato, nearly 85,000 German soldiers have been captured since 1945. Photograph: David Rose

Parole Board attacks Howard

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The Parole Board yesterday became the latest organisation to attack the Home Secretary's tough sentencing proposals which it argues will put the public at risk from dangerous criminals.

In a strongly worded condemnation of Michael Howard's plans for persistent criminals, the board said that the proposals made reoffending more likely and would "prejudice the safety of the public".

The comments, which were published yesterday in the board's annual report, follow widespread criticism from the judiciary, opposition groups, and penal reformers.

Mr Howard is expected to publish a Bill in the next few weeks which proposes tougher sentencing on repeat offenders.

The board is concerned about plans to abolish automatic release for prisoners serving less than four years after completing half their sentence and the removal of discretionary parole for long term

offenders. In future, prisoners would get 15 to 20 per cent deducted from their sentence only if they behave well.

The board concludes: "We believe that the proposals will lead to an abandonment of [the] rehabilitation process, replacing [an effective] system with one which will be worse in almost every respect. This will result in poorer protection for the public. The board strongly believes that the Government will be making a serious, and potentially dangerous mistake."

SAS man wins Britain's top military job

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

A former SAS officer is taking over Britain's top military job next April, when Britain's last Field Marshal retires. General Sir Charles Guthrie, head of the Army, will be Chief of Defence Staff, Britain's top serviceman, when Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge retires.

His appointment after a prolonged contest with the head of the Navy, Admiral Sir Jock Slater, marks a striking victory for the Army over the Navy and RAF, which for much of recent history have been more glamorous and seen as more crucial to British strategic priorities.

The Ministry of Defence said it had not yet decided who will be the new head of the Army. General Sir Michael Rose, former UN commander in Bosnia and also an SAS officer, is clearly in the running, but service sources yesterday said the less flamboyant General Sir Roger Wheeler, head of UK

Land Command, was more likely because he was "a safe pair of hands".

Sir Peter Inge took over the post of CDS in March 1994, after the resignation of Marshal of the RAF Sir Peter Harding, who was disgraced in a sex scandal. But unlike previous holders of Britain's top military post, Sir Charles will not be promoted to "five-star" rank, which was abolished last summer. He will remain a general, though first among equals, a reflection of the shrinking of Britain's armed forces.

General Guthrie, 57, will be Britain's senior service officer, in charge of the Navy, Army and RAF. The head of the Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, has spent longer in the job than normal, because of the early death of his predecessor, Air Chief Marshal Sir John Thompson. Sir Peter has also served for longer than expected, following Sir Peter Harding's premature exit.

General Guthrie joined the

Welsh Guards in 1959, and the SAS in 1966, serving for four years in Aden, the Persian Gulf, Malaysia and East Africa. After Staff College and service in Cyprus and London, he became commander of the Welsh Guards in 1977, serving in Berlin and Northern Ireland.

His service has followed a fairly conventional pattern, commanding 4th Armoured Brigade in Germany in the early 1980s and 1st British Corps in 1989-92, in the last stages of the Cold War. He was appointed Chief of General Staff on 15 March 1994.

Navy sources last night said they were disappointed, and that they believed the Government underestimates the importance of the maritime dimension of strategy.

MoD sources said General Guthrie was selected on the basis of operational experience, leadership, "international acumen" and "qualities of impartiality" in dealing with matters affecting all three services.

Evicted eco-villagers pledge to fight on for Guinness site

Protesters vowed yesterday to continue their environmental battle with the brewer Guinness over the future of a derelict site in London, after being evicted from the plot in a dawn raid.

About 50 protesters were removed from the "eco-village" in Wandsworth, south-west London, after 12 bailiffs broke down the barricades, pulled people off roof-tops and dragged them from trees as more than 100 police officers stood by. One woman was questioned over an alleged assault and another environmental campaigner was taken to hospital with a minor head injury sustained during his removal from a 15ft-high makeshift home.

Security guards hired by Guinness were last night guard-

ing the site to ensure it was not occupied again. Several trees were chopped down to restrict access.

But the campaign group in charge of the protest, The Land is Ours, said the battle to secure the 13-acre site beside the River Thames, nicknamed "Pure Genius" after the Guinness slogan, would continue to save it for community use or low-cost housing.

George Monbiot, a group spokesman, said: "In many ways, we feel a sense of triumph, the campaign has been a great success. It has been five-and-a-half months since we moved on to the land. We've also succeeded in pushing a lot of issues up the political agenda, such as affordable housing and the dereliction in our cities."

The campaigners resisted eviction for several hours after climbing on top of the main 20ft, make-shift structure in the centre of the camp, as well as on to a gantry leading to a disused jetty. The bailiffs, enforcing a High Court writ, used cranes and ladders to reach them.

The "eco-villagers" set up home in May to protest at Guinness's plans to develop the former distillery site into a Safeway supermarket, with houses and riverside walk, and to promote employment generating uses. The group said planning permission should not be granted for the site.

A Guinness spokeswoman said the "squatters" would not change the company's plans to develop the site if it was granted planning permission.

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Neil fired because of Murdoch's TV interests

Story on Pergau dam affair upset proprietor's plans for Asia channel

CHRIS BLACKHURST

Andrew Neil was dismissed as editor of the *Sunday Times* with a £1m pay-off because Rupert Murdoch, the owner, feared his television interests in Asia would be damaged by the paper's allegations about the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed.

According to his autobiography, to be published this month, Mr Neil insisted on a "golden parachute" agreement to pay him £1m to leave after Mr Murdoch became alarmed at repercussions for his media operations in the Far East and South-East Asia. Mr Murdoch owns Star TV, the satellite channel which is beamed into millions of homes in India, China and the booming tiger economies of South-East Asia from Hong Kong.

Mr Neil was moved to front a new current-affairs show on

Fox TV in the United States - after receiving his pay-off.

According to the book, Ministers told Mr Neil and the *Sunday Times* that a deal had been worked out between Mr Murdoch and Dr Mahathir under which Mr Neil's head was offered on a plate in return for the media tycoon being allowed to do business in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir complained directly to Mr Murdoch about the *Sunday Times*'s claim about the Malaysian Prime Minister's business dealings. Mr Murdoch soothed him by saying Mr Neil was a "rogue editor" and would be sorted out.

The newspaper chief's overriding concern was the fall-out for Star TV, not only in Malaysia, which he regarded as an ideal target but in the rest of the region. He also feared the *Sunday Times* may have started investigating other



In the limelight: Andrew Neil in his office at the *Sunday Times* in Wapping

Photograph: Brian Harris

economies and their leaders. India and China were two big Star TV markets. There was also the pressure from big British companies which had seen their

trade destroyed by worsening relations with Malaysia, not only by the *Sunday Times* report but also by the parallel Pergau Dam affair. At the time, Mr

Neil's move was a surprise. He had always revelled in being editor of the *Sunday Times*, but it appears Mr Murdoch became envious of the limelight he en-

joyed. On one occasion he was dining with Mr Murdoch in a restaurant when another diner came to their table and greeted him but ignored the News In-

ternational tycoon. But the book makes plain that it was his paper's onslaught against Dr Mahathir and the Malaysian leader's violent reaction which provoked his demise.

Ironically, one economy it does not reach is Malaysia, where Dr Mahathir regards it as too Western. However, Mr Murdoch was determined to crack the country which has the fastest-growing economy in the region.

Mr Murdoch was incandescent with rage at the paper's report in early 1994 about Dr Mahathir.

Mr Neil's disclosures in his book, *Full Disclosure*, are bound to damage relations between Mr Murdoch and Mr Mahathir, not least because Mr Neil stands by his paper's story.

It will seriously embarrass Mr Murdoch, who is sensitive to claims that his wider business affairs hold sway over his domestic British newspaper and television operations.

Dr Mahathir's response to the article in 1994 was to impose

a blockade on British companies dealing with Malaysia.

While that ban was eventually lifted, Mr Neil says he was in no doubt that Mr Murdoch was worried about losing his Star TV channel, which he wanted to broadcast in Malaysia and across South East Asia.

In order to placate the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mr Neil makes plain for the first time, he was moved to America, to Fox TV, another Murdoch station.

While the job at Fox was exciting, it achieved Mr Murdoch's initial purpose: to get rid of an awkward editor. If Mr Neil was a success in the post, as an editor on a new primetime current-affairs show, all well and good. If he was not, he could be dealt with later.

Subsequently, the two became favourites: Dr Mahathir was guest of honour at Mr Murdoch's conference for senior executives in Australia also attended by Tony Blair.

Battersea-ram, page 21

Leeson boss 'deserved no big bonus'

The boss of the jailed trader Nick Leeson, who was promised a £500,000 bonus hours before Barings collapsed, should in hindsight have been offered something minimal instead, the bank's deputy chairman said yesterday.

Andrew Tuckey is said to have promised Mary Walz the huge award 13 hours before news broke of the disaster which Leeson caused in Singapore.

Mr Tuckey told a tribunal that even if Leeson's activities had been uncovered earlier, her bonus would have been "minimal".

"In retrospect our assessment of the financial products group's profits was way out," he said. "Mary Walz had failed to understand, along with others, what Nick Leeson was doing. If we had detected Nick Leeson earlier she probably would have received a minimal bonus."

He added: "I did not know anything of the disaster that had overwhelmed Barings until midnight that day."

Nicholas Underhill QC, for the bank, asked whether Ms Walz would have received a bonus if the bank had known about Leeson's disastrous losses on the day the bonus was handed out.

Mr Tuckey replied: "No. I would have cancelled all those conversations." He admitted that he had praised Ms Walz and handed her a note informing her of her £500,000 bonus, but claimed that it was only provisional.

"I handed over the paper bearing the words 'Mary Walz - £500,000'," he said. "I was seeing 40 other people over a period of two days. The slip of paper had no legal significance - it was just to make sure there were no mistakes."

"I wrote the note just before she walked in. I did not say it was provisional because it seemed obvious. It was inconceivable that a director could not have been aware of this."

"I told her she had had a fantastic year. The department had substantially outstripped any other area of the business for the year in question."

"The performance of the equity group was very remarkable although other parts of the business were also profitable. It was the most exceptional part of the business."

Mr Tuckey told the hearing that bonuses in Ms Walz's department had to be profit-related to encourage success.

"The profit of an individual unit was not the only factor but in the case of the financial products groups this was a new business in a very competitive market," he said.

Bonuses in her department were more reliant on profit than any other within the bank. "Profitability was by far and away the most important aspect," Mr Tuckey said.

Ms Walz claims the £500,000 bonus under the Wages Act. The hearing at Stratford, east London, continues.



Mary Walz arriving at the hearing yesterday. She 'failed to understand'

Photograph: Andrew Buerman

Yes, work is the curse of the drinking classes

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Men who believe work is the curse of the drinking classes may have got it right after all.

The irredeemably sober Policy Studies Institute has discovered that males with "attitude" and a big thirst for alcohol have a better chance of finding employment if they lose their jobs than bosses' pets who drink in moderation.

In its report *Long Term Unemployment*, the institute ventures that big drinkers often collect pub cronies who can make useful contacts during job-hunting.

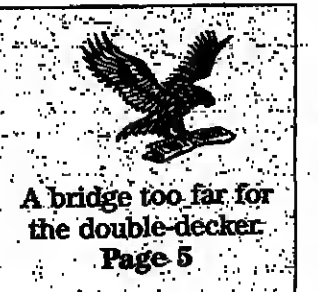
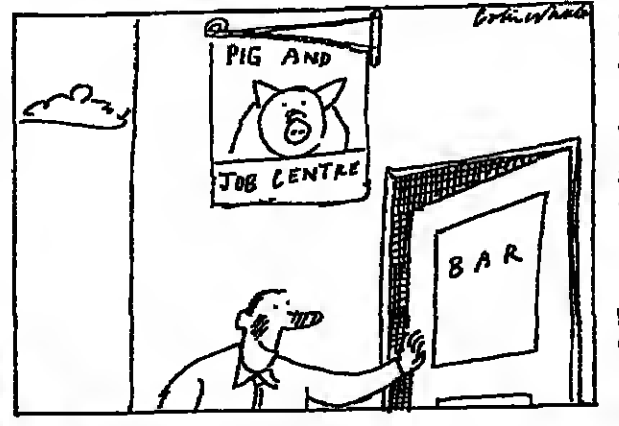
An analysis of figures prepared for the Department of Education and Employment reveals that men with a "favourable attitude to work" were at greater risk of redundancy than those with a more negative approach.

Co-author of the report, Joan Payne, believes the awkward squad that spends most time in the pub might be more outgoing and self-confident and therefore more employable despite their penchant for alcohol.

But less encouraging for the macho pub-gear is the finding that men tend to fall apart after divorce or separation. Drawing on data from two national surveys, the *National Child Development Study* and the *Retirement Study*, it was found that unemployed men who break up with their wife or partner are less likely to find work, while the chances of women in a similar position are greatly enhanced.

In early adulthood the risk of long-term unemployment can vary enormously. A Scottish man with no children and no qualifications who works in a personal service or a semi-skilled job and who has been unemployed in the past, was highly likely to experience a long spell out of work.

A professional man living in Greater London, trained and educated to degree level, with a driving licence, no children and no previous history of unemployment had a "near zero risk" of being on the dole for any length of time. Presumably his chances of being out of work were greatly enhanced if he was teetotal and dead keen.



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news

Reservoir plan for a hot, dry Britain

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Britain's big, privatised water companies yesterday began a campaign to build huge new reservoirs and add to supplies, claiming that climate change was forcing their hand.

The Water Services Association, which represents nine of the ten large drinking-water and sewage groups, was briefing journalists to pre-empt a government report on future water use being published today.

The association claims that reducing mains leakage and attempting to persuade the public to use water more carefully is no longer enough to guarantee freedom from shortages. A new "twin-track approach" is needed, in which water resources are boosted, Severn Trent's managing director, Brian Duckworth, said.

But large new reservoirs and the pipes and pumps needed to service them cost tens of millions of pounds, while the water companies are under strong political pressure to hold down bills to customers which have risen much faster than inflation in the years since privatisation.

"We want to start a debate," a spokesman for the Water Services Association said. "Climate change is something the industry has to take on board, and we need to think long term."

In the meantime the contents of today's government report was publicised by Friends of the Earth and the Labour Party, to whom it had been leaked. It was revealed that ministers were also taking global warming seriously, and want the water companies to reassess supply and demand in a warmer Britain.

The Government has no proposals for radical new measures. But, after several years of drought and restrictions, it says there is a need for "greater dialogue between water compa-

nies and their customers on the balance to be struck between higher security of supply and higher costs".

Household water use has been rising by 1 per cent per year as people become more affluent. In 1961 the average person used 85 litres per day. Today, with more bathing and showering, more use of dishwashers and washing machines and more garden watering, that figure has nearly doubled.

Throughout the Nineties the Government has been in favour of "demand management", which means persuading customers to use less. That is why it has backed the spread of water meters, but it has been criticised for doing little concrete to encourage water efficiency. For example, showers - which use far less water than baths - are not mandatory in new homes.

At the moment much of England has a hidden drought, with water tables in five aquifers dotted around the country at record low levels. Yorkshire Water announced yesterday that all its water restrictions would finally be lifted next month, but there are also bans in parts of Southern and nearly all of North West's areas.

Until this year the companies claimed that they and their customers were the victims of freakishly low rainfall, of the kind that only happened once in 100 years or more. But now they are saying this could be an early sign of man-made climate change. Rainfall has been below average for more than two years.

At the moment, supercomputer simulations of global warming over the next 50 years predict that Britain's total rainfall will increase. But summers across most of England and Wales are forecast to be longer, hotter and drier, sending demand soaring and creating the need for more to be collected and stored in winter.

Health White Paper: GPs, dentists and pharmacists see benefits both for themselves and patients



Muscling in: A physiotherapist, Cheryl Atkins, treating a patient at Manor House in Glossop, Derbyshire, a surgery praised by John Major

Photograph: Phil Noble

Back to the future with cottage hospitals

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Family doctors, dentists, and pharmacists yesterday gave a cautious welcome to the Government's new vision of primary care which gives them greater freedom in the way they practice, promises more choice for patients and better tailoring of services to local need.

In stark contrast to the confrontational approach adopted by his predecessors and eschewing the imposition of new ideas, Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, outlined a quiet revolution in which those "at the sharp end" seize the initiative.

Implementation of the changes in the primary care White Paper, *Choice and Opportunity*, launched yesterday, will only follow if voluntary pilot-schemes and evaluation of the Government's proposals

prove their worth, Mr Dorrell promised.

One of the most dramatic proposals is for a change in GPs' contracts which will speed the growth of "super-surgeries" or cottage hospitals offering a range of healthcare including minor surgery.

Currently all family doctors are independent contractors with the Secretary of State and are obliged to provide specific core services which rules out

flexibility, the White Paper says.

Under new legislation, practice-based contracts would be introduced in which a particular practice rather than a GP contracts with a health authority to provide services for a local population. It will allow nurses, therapists and managers to play a more high profile role and organisations or groups of individuals other than GPs to provide services including, in theory, retailers such as Asda or

Sainsbury's, as revealed in *The Independent* yesterday.

Salaried positions are proposed for GPs employed by a practice, trust or health authority who want to work more regular hours and concentrate on patient care rather than the business of running a practice. This is expected to improve care in inner-city areas which face a severe shortage of GPs.

Another significant development is a single budget for

general medical services, hospital and community health services and prescribing which will, in effect, allow some fundholding GPs to become "mini-health authorities" providing all services for their patients.

Greater flexibility for dentists in the crisis-ridden NHS dental service is discussed with a range of pilot schemes for health authorities to buy dental services from local practitioners.

A wider role for pharmacists

is endorsed with the creation of incentives for health authorities to buy a wider range of services, including the pharmacy as first stop for the treatment of minor ailments.

The British Medical Association applauded the Government's recognition of the value of primary care. The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts said the White Paper would mean wider choice and improved value for money.

Peak practice that comes top for service

CHARLIE BAIN

Deep in the heart of the Peak District down a small side road off the main high street in Glossop, Derbyshire, lies Manor House doctor's surgery, the apple of John Major's eye and the super-surgery of the

Conservative future. In his speech to the Tory conference last week, the Prime Minister used Manor House as a prime example of a flourishing fundholding practice.

"Waiting lists have been slashed," he said. "People no longer have to trek to the district hospital... more money is spent on patients, less money spent on paper work. This practice could be the model for the future."

The holders of last year's Fundholding Practice of the Year award, Manor House is the surgery that offers everything - osteopathy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, counselling and physiotherapy, all carried out by an in-house team.

According to the practice's senior partner, Dr John Oldham, all these services have had

a significant impact on hospital referrals, carried out at less cost.

"We are doing more at the surgery for the individual patients," he said. "Our anticoagulant clinic is one of the most successful services. In the past, patients would have to travel 15 miles to one of the two local hospitals but now they come to the clinic for treatment instead."

"We analysed the cost of this new service and it was at a much-reduced cost to the NHS. The same saving across the whole district would save the

NHS £750,000 a year," Dr Oldham is immensely proud of the practice's achievements, in particular its funding of a local cottage hospital which saw the inauguration of a flourishing "homeward bound unit". The project helps to avoid patients being sent to nursing homes after their hospital care. Now 60 per cent go home and it saves the NHS £0.5m a year.

For the people of Glossop and the surrounding area the emergence of Manor House has been a godsend. Many used to

spend time and money travelling as far as Manchester for treatment.

One patient whose gained significantly is Margaret Gainey, 69, who suffers from asthma and acute bronchitis which caused a blood clot on her lung. A non-fundhold patient, her GP arranged for her to be admitted to the anticoagulant clinic at Manor House to save her the 15-mile trek into Manchester. Mrs Gainey now visits the clinic, just four miles from her home, once a month.

Another patient to benefit is 68-year-old Frances Kane "We all consider ourselves very fortunate because we never have problems getting an appointment," she said. "Everyone is so nice here, I'm not surprised Mr Major was impressed."

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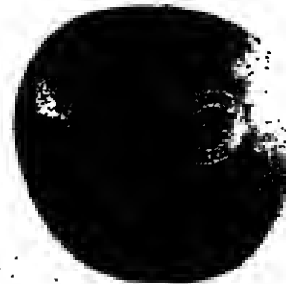
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مكتبة من الأصول

Banks using customers' cash for arms deals

MICHAEL STREETER

Britain's high-street banks are criticised today in a report that outlines their "despicable" use of customers' money to help finance arms deals with repressive regimes.

The report, prepared by the British-based World Development Movement, is especially critical of Midland Bank for assisting the sale of British Aerospace Hawk trainer jets to the Indonesian government, which

has a poor human rights record. It also attacks Lloyds, Barclays and NatWest, as well as Midland, for their role in "boosting Saddam Hussein's military capacity" before the Gulf war, in finance export deals.

Barry Coates, WDM's director, said: "It is despicable that many high-street banks are using our money to finance arms deals to dictators and repressive regimes. Banks must adopt a more ethical policy on arms and invest in a safer future."

The WDM is pressing for an ethical code of conduct applicable to all banks, to reassure customers. Its report, *From High Street to Battlefield: UK Banks and the Arms Trade*, says the end of the Cold War combined with a greater Government push for exports has led to a "new open market for weapons". The increased use of the Government's Export Credit Guarantees Department (ECGD) to underpin sales of weapons has encouraged banks

and arms companies because it has effectively removed their financial risk, the report says. Apart from the Hawk jets deal, Midland is also criticised for helping the sale of a Rapier air defence system to the same country, and for deals involving Turkey and Iraq.

WDM, which started a campaign on banks financing arms deals two years ago, claims customers have closed accounts as a result and students have boycotted Lloyds and Midland.

A spokeswoman for Lloyds TSB said the bank would only consider lending if a deal had been approved by the Government, and that they would not knowingly do business with a customer who did not follow arms sales rules - a view echoed by Midland Bank.

Barclays Bank has also said that it only financed manufacturing customers, deals that had to be licensed by the Government. NatWest's policy has been that financing arms deals with "irresponsible" countries is "unacceptable", and that each transaction is treated case by case. The attack on the banks comes as the Cooperative Bank, which is not named in the report, today publishes an "open letter" to its rivals on arms trade financing. The message from managing director Terry Thomas will be that the banks should adopt a common policy on such funding.

Shunt stunt: To demonstrate the danger to rail bridges from high vehicles, a bus was driven into one deliberately. The bus lost

They huffed and they bussed, but it still wouldn't fall down

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

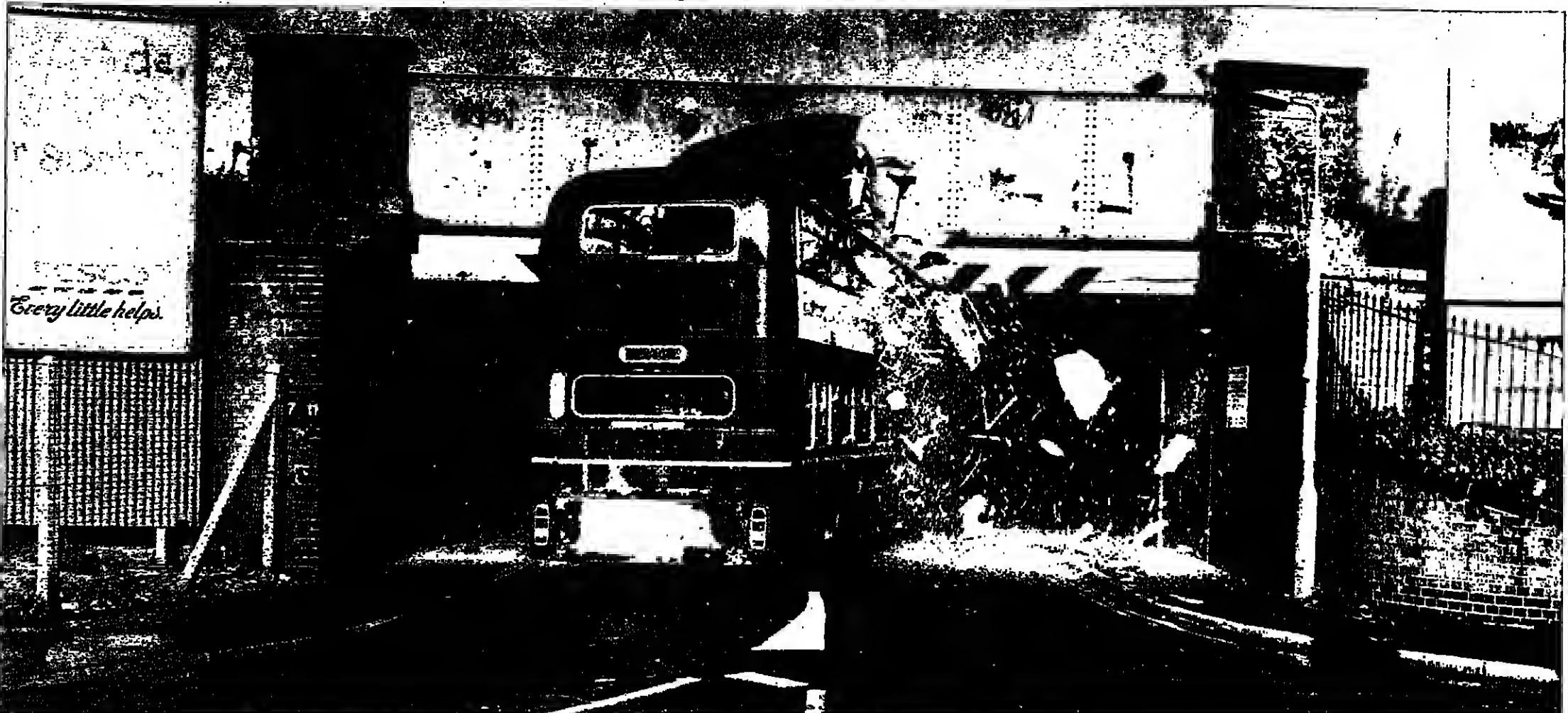
The 25-year-old green double decker had been rescued from a scrapyard. At the wheel was John Carr, a stuntman. He put his foot down and drove straight at the bridge.

He smashed into it at 25mph in a cacophony of broken glass and tearing metal. The bus collapsed, but the bridge didn't.

The demonstration had been staged by Railtrack to illustrate the dangers posed by the increasing number of high vehicles "bashing" into its bridges.

The bridge, in Whitehouse Road, Swindon, had the unenviable record of being the most bashed bridge in Britain with 82 hits since January 1990.

The 83rd seemed to be an attempt to turn the double decker into a single one. Even though we had been expecting the bang, it was a profound shock.



The crunch: The bus was driven by the man who delivers chocolates in a television advertisement. He said the shattering glass looked beautiful

Photograph: John Lawrence

More than half the roof of the bus was removed but the bridge, which carries the Great Western main line, was undamaged, apart from the sign reading "3.1m, 10.0" which was soon replaced. The bridge, built in 1910, was quickly passed as safe for the trains.

It is not always so easy. Since

British Rail started monitoring bridge strikes in 1990, the number has gone up from 806 to 1,101 last year, 59 per cent due to driver error and a third as a result of poor loading of the vehicle.

Newly privatised Railtrack, which is now responsible, reckons such strikes cost £5m in repairs and much more in train delays for which it now has to reimburse train operators.

Each time a bridge is hit, an engineer has to check it before trains can use it again, a process which often takes several hours as few people are qualified for the task.

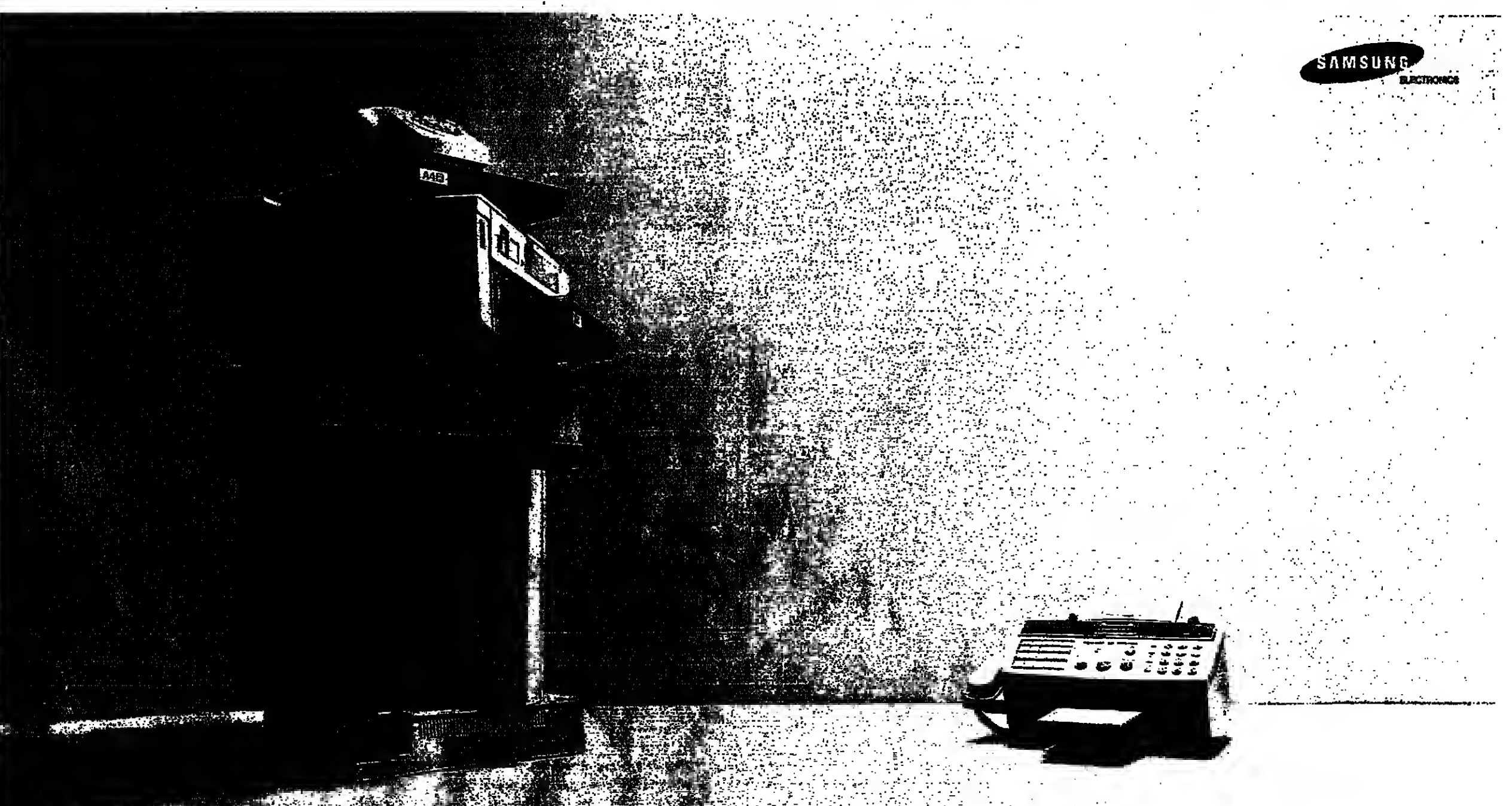
Mr Carr is the man who

risked life and limb in the Milk Tray advertisements to ensure that the lady got her chocolates. He emerged looking slightly shaken.

"As the glass shattered, it was so beautiful, it looked like a rainbow," he said. So that's why those thousand or more drivers a year do it.

Britain's most damaged bridges January 1990-June 1996

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Whitehouse Road, Swindon - 82 strikes | 7. Hawkesley Road, Westbury, nr Bath - 41 |
| 2. Stuntney Road (A142), Ely - 61 | 8. Station Road (B470), Langley, nr Slough - 39 |
| 3. Mill Lane, Bradford - 54 | 9. Tregoss Moor Road (A30), Roche, nr Bodmin - 37 |
| 4. Stoke Road (A5006), Stoke-on-Trent - 47 | 10. Dingley Road (A427), Market Harborough - 36 |
| 5. West Street, Glasgow - 43 | |
| 6. Barrowby Road (A52), Grantham - 42 | |



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IND W/C 14/11

politics

NHS lost £1m on computer agency sale

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A National Health Service information technology agency was sold too cheaply to a US firm which, in recent months, has been picking up the bulk of government computer contracts, according to an official report out today.

The study by the National Audit Office, the public spending watchdog, found that the South and West Regional Health Authority could have secured better value for the taxpayer when it sold the Swift computer division to EDS last year.

The NAO report will fuel the controversy at Westminster about the amount of public sector work being awarded to EDS. Computer contracts from several government departments are now in the hands of the company, once run by maverick US presidential candidate, Ross Perot. Opposition MPs have been pressing for further details of how the firm has

come to dominate the Government's computer market.

In a highly critical report, the NAO said that the health authority put a value on Swift's software and hardware but did not pay enough attention to the agency's worth as a business opportunity.

Consultants hired by the NAO put a likely value on Swift of £7m to £11m. This compared with the deal agreed with EDS, which saw the US firm pay £800,000 for Swift's assets and to provide future discounts to the agency's customers – primarily the health authority – worth £2.3m to £4.3m.

Swift was not properly valued by the health authority. As a result, EDS got a bargain. Under NHS rules, the authority was not required to estimate the possible financial return to EDS from the agency.

The sale was supposed to be competitive, but only four early bids were received and of these, only two submitted an offer.

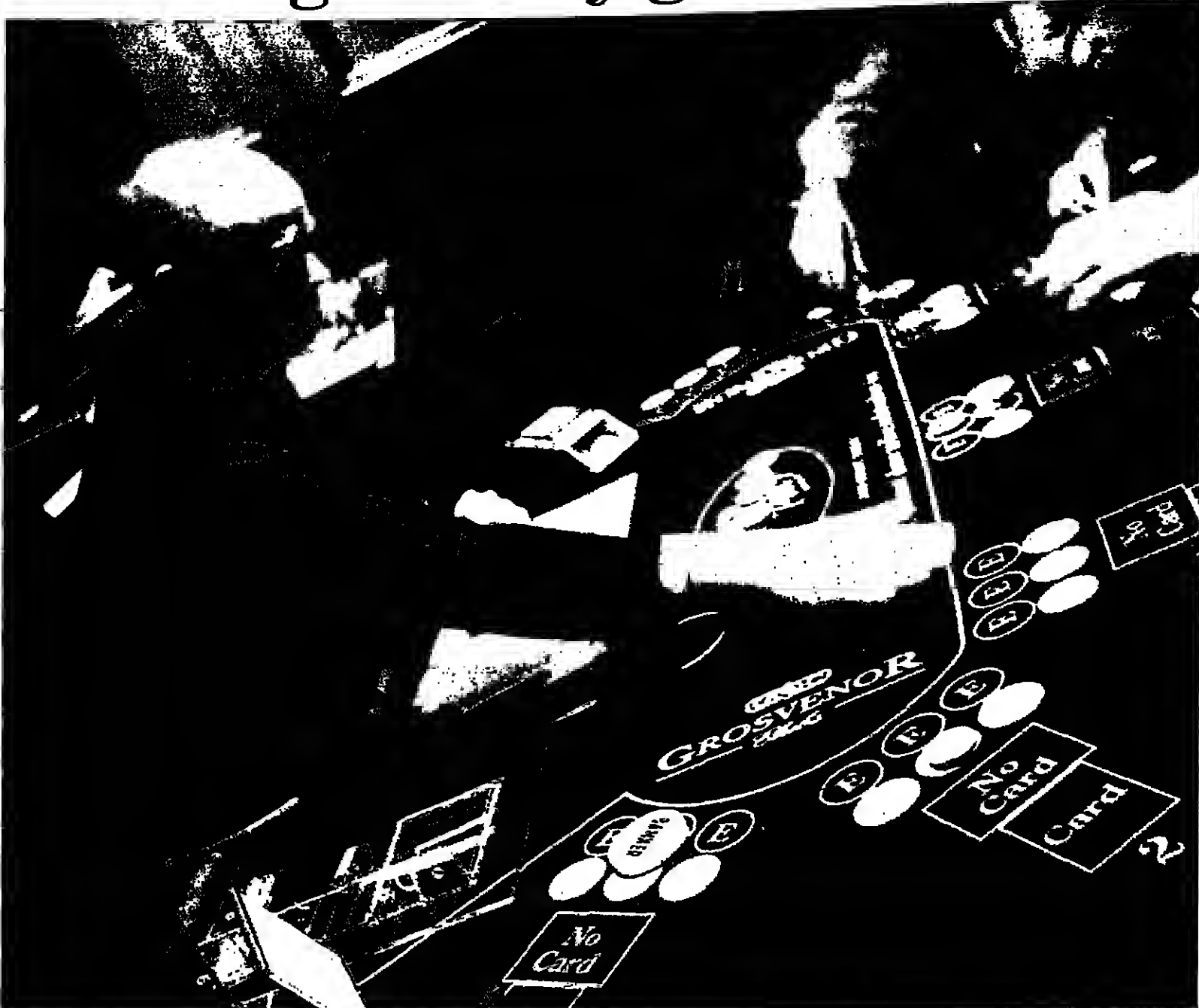
When EDS emerged as the final bidder, the company was able to negotiate its price down by almost £1m. This was because EDS agreed to take on Swift's pension arrangements, which brought the offer down by £450,000, and problems with the agency's software, which knocked a further £500,000 off the price.

In future, said the NAO, such sales should be conducted on a more realistic, commercial footing. Instead of selling off the individual component parts, the public sector seller should pay closer attention to the likely financial return.

When drawing up short-lists, the government vendor should try and keep as many potential purchasers in the frame as possible and for as long as possible, recommended the NAO.

To avoid problems emerging at the final stage and the last remaining bidder being able to talk down the price, the seller should make all information available to all the bidders, said the report.

Gambling industry gets lucky at last



Relaxing gameplan: Home Office proposals will allow casino members to buy alcohol, with debit cards, after midnight

Photograph: David Rose

Field trailblazes his radical pension plan

JOHN RENTOU
Political Correspondent

A blueprint for "thinking the unthinkable" about the welfare state was unveiled yesterday by Frank Field, the Labour MP regarded as a trailblazer for Tony Blair. The plans from Mr Field, chairman of the all-party social security select committee, had been eagerly awaited as evidence of the possible shape of a radical overhaul under Labour.

A representative for Harriet Harman, Labour's social security spokeswoman, welcomed the proposals for "stakeholder pensions", which aim to give people a fund of their own on top of the basic state pension. But the net effect of the plans is remarkably

similar to "old Labour" policies to raise taxes and redistribute resources from rich to poor.

Figures produced by the Government Actuary for Mr Field show that those earning less than about £15,000 a year would gain in their pay packet and in future pension rights, while those above that level would pay more. In all, taxes and compulsory contributions would rise by £3bn a year.

The most striking proposal is to close down the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps); from 2000 all employees would be required to contribute to their own pension. The plans would be funded by a cut in the starting rate of income tax to 5p in the pound, with the standard

rate cut from 24p to 19p, offset by national insurance contributions. In addition, those earning more than £100 a week would make compulsory contributions to a second pension.

The Labour leader is known to admire Mr Field, and to have been disappointed with Chris Smith, who he charged with "thinking the unthinkable" as social security spokesman. But Mr Field's plans are likely to be unacceptable to either Mr Blair or Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, who both thought Labour's plans to increase income tax at the last election were a vote-loser.

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Bingo clubs may be allowed to advertise on television and radio, and betting shops and casinos should soon be able to promote their services in print, the Home Office said yesterday. The proposals are part of the Government's initiative to deregulate the gaming industry. Under Home Office proposals strict licensing curbs that forbid the serving of alcohol in casinos after midnight are to come to an end. Casinos in England

and Wales will be allowed to sell beers, wines and spirits until 3am in London, and until 2am in the regions.

The 48-hour rule, which prevents anybody playing in a casino until two days after applying for membership, is to be cut to 24 hours. Under the proposals, debit cards will also be allowed in casinos and bingo clubs. The measures are included in a draft Deregulation (Casinos) Order which should

come into play in the New Year if they receive a smooth passage through Parliament.

Timothy Kirkhope, Home Office minister, added: "On bingo and betting shops, I propose to lay a draft order later this year to remove restrictions on print advertising and possibly to allow broadcast advertising of bingo."

Earlier proposals to allow 13 new casinos to be built in England and Wales are to be re-ex-

amined after local authorities from two of the areas earmarked – Croydon in south London, and Peterborough in Cambridgeshire – raised objections. Additional sites may be added to the original list. The potential sites already mentioned are Dartford and Folkestone in Kent, Gloucester, Hastings in East Sussex, Ipswich in Suffolk, Morecambe in Lancashire, Oxford, Redbridge in Essex, Slough in Berkshire,

Swindon in Wiltshire and Weymouth, Dorset. An announcement is expected in a few weeks.

Mr Kirkhope also announced that additional measures would be considered before being put before Parliament. These proposals would be to allow postal applications for membership, group membership, and slot machines in casinos.

The proposals reflect the Government's deregulation policy and follow complaints by the gaming industry that it has been losing a lot of business to the National Lottery.

The deregulation of the gaming sector gets underway

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

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Arms agreement frees Stormont logjam

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

A rare instance of progress in the multi-party talks at Stormont yesterday led participants into their first substantive talks on the issue of arms decommissioning, a move which was hailed as a modest breakthrough.

Although the talks have been underway since 10 June, the participants – the British and Irish governments and nine of Northern Ireland's 10 largest political groupings – had not previously reached agreement on rules and procedure.

The tenth party, Sinn Féin, is not in the talks. Seven of the nine parties signed up overnight to a compromise arrangement aimed at moving the talks on, though in the face of angry dissent from the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists and another unionist party. These denounced David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party for allegedly sidelining the arms issue.

Much of the argument of recent months has centred on the question of when the controversial decommissioning issue should be addressed, with Mr

Paisley and others insisting it should be at the top of the agenda. The arrangement put into operation yesterday meant a debate on decommissioning began after less than an hour spent in discussion of a draft agenda.

The Ulster Unionist party spokesman, Reg Empey, said last night: "We were accused of degrading decommissioning and putting it on the back burner – nothing of the case. The first item was the circulation of draft agendas for the substantive talks. That took a total of 31 minutes, then at 3pm we commenced the decommissioning debate."

One important effect of the new arrangement is that it facilitates the loyalist fringe parties in staying at the table. This is seen as a helpful factor in persuading loyalist paramilitary groups not to end their ceasefire.

The modest movement in the talks has at least had the effect of relieving fears that they would run into the sands by the end of this month without any progress having been made. The formula arrived at seems to assure their continuation for some time to come, although

most participants say that rapid progress is not to be expected.

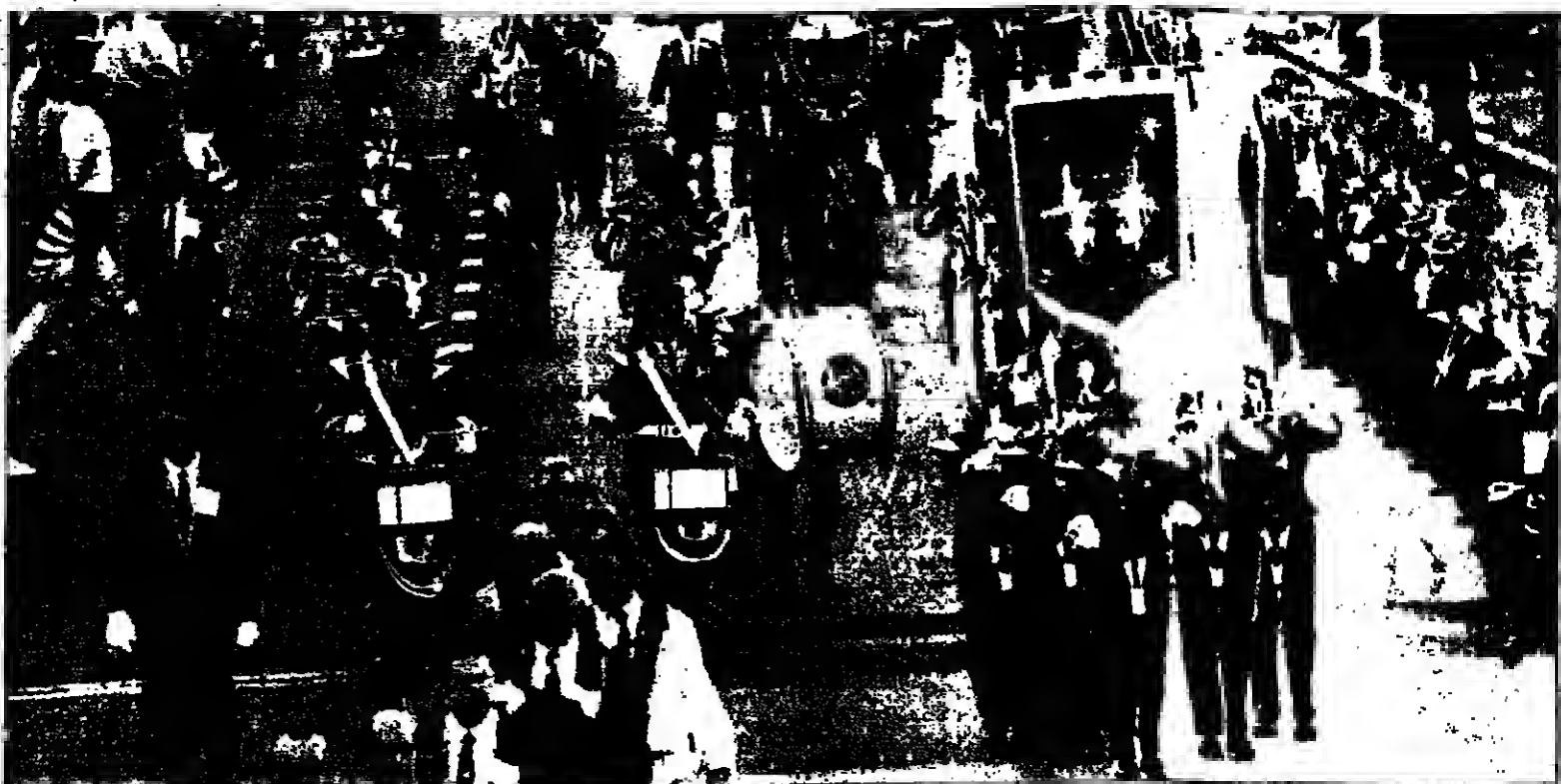
Lord Alderdice, leader of the moderate Alliance party, said: "The progress was very important but one shouldn't overstate what was achieved. What we have now got is an agreement about how we talk about the agenda and how we talk about decommissioning. That's a step forward, but it's not the kind of dead-endly dangerous betrayal that the DUP have suggested, not at all."

He added that he believed this stage of the talks would last for a few weeks.

The Apprentice Boys of Derry, one of the Protestant marching organisations, have applied for permission to walk about Londonderry city's walls this weekend.

In August a crisis was averted when the organisation postponed plans for a similar parade. The Bogside Residents Group yesterday called on the marchers to open talks with local Catholics on the plans. The group said that if they did there was a very strong likelihood of agreement on the issue.

Leading article, page 15



In step: Apprentice Boys at Craigavon Bridge in August. They have applied to parade Londonderry's walls at the weekend. Photograph: Trevor McEnde

Agencies supply drunk teachers

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Drunk teachers and those on a Government blacklist are being sent into schools as supply teachers because of the failure to regulate teacher agencies.

A survey of Greater London secondary schools by Margaret Hodge, the Labour MP for Barking, found that three-quarters used private agencies and a third complained about the teachers they were sent. They worried that those recruited by agencies had escaped from full-time teaching because they could not cope or had been sacked. One teacher who was too drunk to teach presented himself in front of a class.

The schools said agencies used teachers who were just babysitters with worksheets, came from abroad and knew nothing about English exams or the national curriculum; were late, racist, or aggressive; or were in the middle of nervous breakdowns. Even when a head sent a teacher back because he was aggressive he was simply sent to another school.

In July, Mrs Hodge told the Commons that a former headmaster on the government blacklist of those barred from teaching turned up in a school

as the director of a Manchester teaching agency, to drum up business. He had been convicted of theft.

Ministers have promised to close a loophole which allows agencies to employ teachers without checks on their background. But Mrs Hodge does not believe the checks will be rigorous enough. "Schools must be able to rely on the agencies to send suitably qualified staff," she said. "The survey proves that some... agencies are failing our children." On average every child is taught by a supply teacher for two classes a week.

Tish Seabourne, managing director of TimePlan, the biggest agency which sends out 700 supply teachers a day, said she supported Mrs Hodge. "It has become clear that other agencies are not applying the same standards as ourselves. We see our rejects turning up in classrooms... In 1992, we asked the Government to bring in regulations to give the whole industry a new framework."

A Department for Education spokesman said guidance on checking supply teachers had been issued to schools in June. "The vast majority of teachers are checked. New legislation will make it compulsory to carry out checks on all teachers."



The men in a desperate race to beat a legal deadline. Page 5

ADVERTISEMENT

Scientists claim breakthrough in zero-gravity sminting

By IAN MODAIRE



Russian volunteers

PHYSICISTS in Cambridge are close to solving the bizarre and baffling phenomenon of zero gravity sminting. A team led by Professor Albert E. Hatt, has been operating with scientists from both the USA and Russia to determine the effects of zero gravity sminting on humming birds.

After being exposed to the effects of a small, blue rectangular pack just once,

the humming birds could achieve a state of complete weightlessness. In other words, they could float. Even more sensational, this experiment has now been carried out on humans; some as heavy as 20 stone.

Leaked photographs taken "somewhere in England" show Russian volunteers floating at least 15 feet in the air and being secured by fishing lines. Professor Hatt explains: "At first, it was a bit tricky with the humans, especially the overweight Russian volunteers."

We had to subject them to continuous sminting before we saw any effect.

But once we got the dose right, we had them floating on air for up to an hour at a time."



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news

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Cars of future: The Tulip (left), the prototype French electric car on which the Coventry experiment is based and the Concept 2096, which finds its way home without a driver

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The biggest ever experiment involving electric cars replacing conventional combustion engine cars is to start in Coventry next month, with 14 Peugeot 106s being operated by five different large organisations.

The experiment, part of a £500,000 project, is designed to test whether electric cars and light vans could be used by a

wide range of organisations to reduce local pollution in towns and cities. It follows a successful two-year experiment in La Rochelle, on the western coast of France with about 40 cars from various companies and which involved members of the public as well as companies. Myles Mackle, who is Coventry council's project officer for the scheme, said: "La Rochelle helped Peugeot to develop the 106 and to test the car in a range

of practical applications. Now we are trying the same thing in a British context."

A future version of the electric car, the Concept 2096, was unveiled at the Motor Show yesterday. Commissioned by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders to celebrate 100 years of the British motor, the car runs on pre-programmed routes, with low emission rates.

The Coventry vehicles, which should all be on the road next

month, are being used by Royal Mail, East Midlands Electricity, PowerGen, Coventry City Council and Peugeot itself. A set of recharging points around the city is being developed to enable vehicles to be refuelled during the day. They will be used as part of these organisations' normal fleet, for routine tasks such as delivering mail and reading meters.

The range of the vehicles is around 60 miles and they have

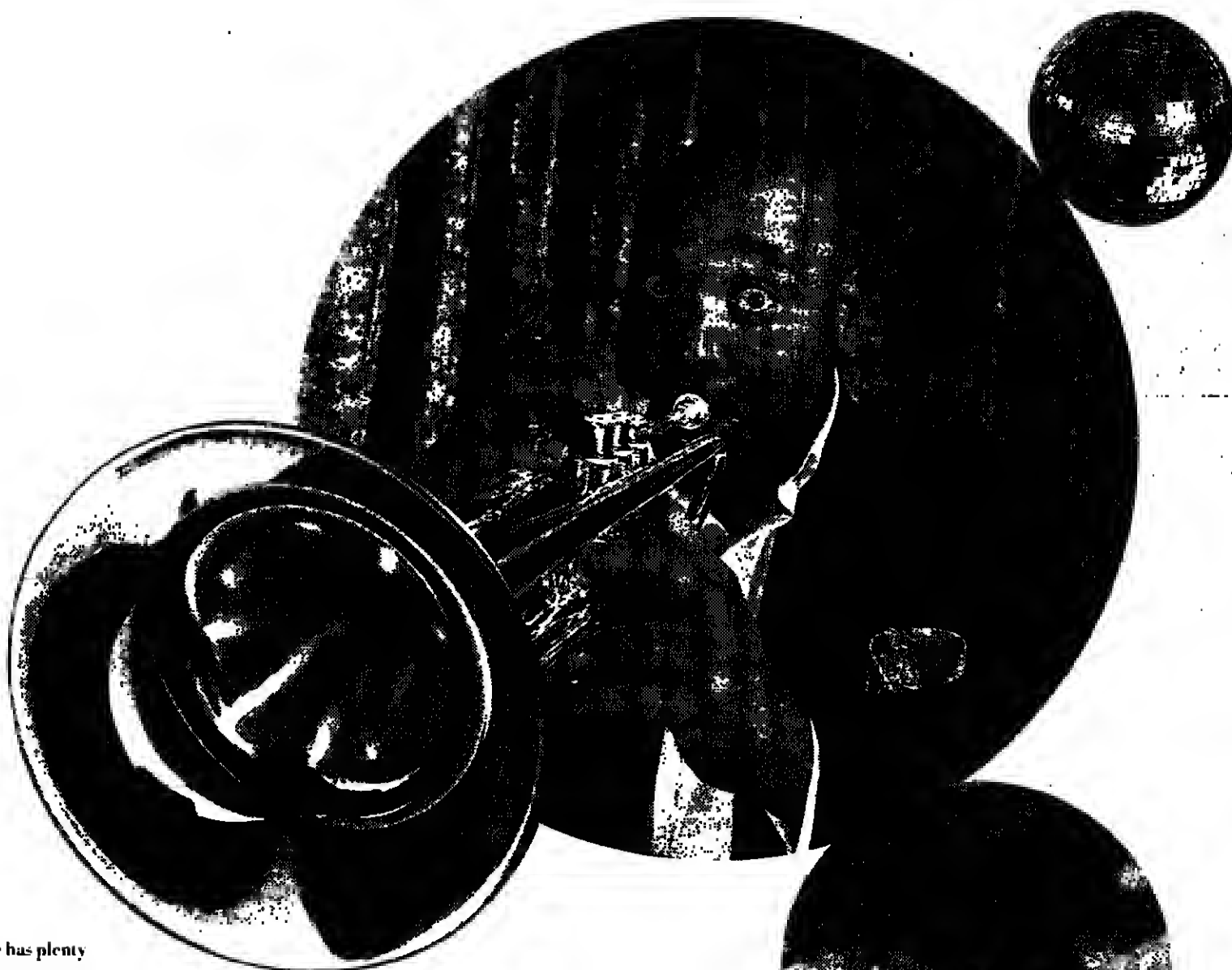
a top speed of 60mph. When *The Independent* drove one, it was responsive and peppy, bellying the sluggish image which has bedevilled electric cars.

The cars use a nickel-cadmium battery which takes four hours to recharge, last for eight years, and cost £12,000, around double their petrol equivalent. Although in France, the 106 has become the first modern electric passenger car to go into production, sales are still very low

and therefore the cost of parts very is high.

The Coventry 106s are virtually the same as the conventional car, except they have reduced space in the boot to accommodate batteries and are four-seater. A spokesman for Peugeot said: "We believe that for electric cars to be accepted widely, they have to provide the same level of quality, comfort, driving pleasure, style and safety as conventional vehicles."

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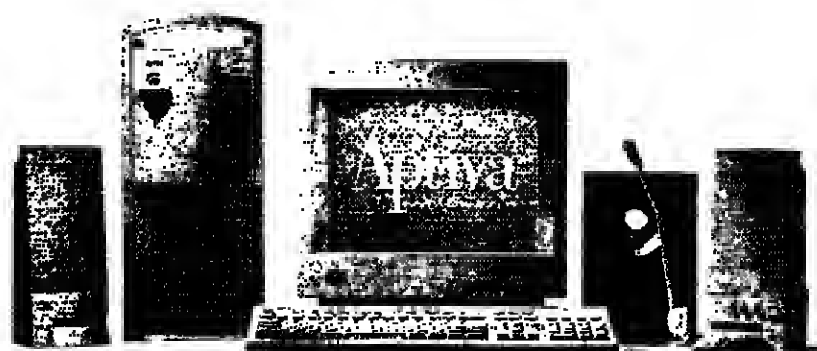
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A19D1610

Foreign firms wheel out £1bn of new money

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

The car industry was boosted yesterday with news of investment by Peugeot, Vauxhall and Rover thought to be worth almost £1bn.

As the Motor Show kicked off at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre it emerged that Peugeot is to build a second model range at its plant at Coventry, securing the future of 2,500 staff and probably creating hundreds more jobs among components suppliers.

Peugeot is notoriously cagey about its investment plans but the board is understood to have decided to expand production significantly at the Ryton plant. The car is thought to be a replacement for the 205, which redefined the small-car market in the 1980s but recently coded a 14-year British sales run.

The news is a vote of confidence by Peugeot in Ryton, which currently assembles the 306 Escort-sized car. The workforce has shrunk from 4,300 to 2,600 in five years and the plant's long-term future had been in doubt. The decision will involve a three-year investment

believed to be worth several hundred million pounds. British engineers have already been seconded to France to work on developing the car.

In another sign of the renaissance of the industry, Vauxhall confirmed that it is to spend £300m, its largest single British investment, updating its factory at Ellesmere Port on Merseyside, which has transformed itself over the past 10 years from General Motors' least productive European factory to the lowest-cost manufacturer of the five plants which make the Astra.

The investment, to be backed by a small government grant, will re-equip the site, raising capacity from 145,000 cars a year to 160,000.

Low labour costs and huge productivity strides have made Britain increasingly attractive to GM; 40 per cent of Ellesmere Port's Astras go abroad, whereas hardly any were exported five years ago. Nick Reilly, Vauxhall's chairman, said: "I had we still been a domestic only producer, the amount of the investment would have been nothing like the amount we've just announced."



Trend-setter: New Land Rover will have features from original

Big plans for little new Land Rover

CHRIS GODSMARK

Land Rover is to build a baby-sized four-wheel-drive vehicle and plans to expand production dramatically, the company announced yesterday.

The compact Land Rover, one of the first fruits of BMW's take-over of Rover three years ago, is designed to head off competition from the Japanese in a fast-growing segment of the off-road market. It will share many of the famed abilities of its illustrious predecessors though few of the compacts are likely to do anything more taxing than pottering around town or a little leisurely motorway cruising.

Land Rover refused to reveal what the compact would look like or how much it will cost but the aim is to attract new buyers to the brand when it goes on sale early in 1998.

It is intended that production at the Solihull manufacturing complex should rise from an anticipated 130,000 vehicles this year to 200,000 by the end of the decade. The investment, which will mean security for the 12,000-strong workforce, will come from the £500m-a-year that BMW is committed to pumping into its British subsidiary. "It's definitely a smaller product than the Discovery and we believe there's plenty of scope to get new buyers," Richard Eley, the project director, said.

Land Rover is thought to have used Toyota's new RAV4 – a chic-looking two-door four-wheel-drive – as its benchmark for the compact. According to Toyota insiders, British engineers bought four of the RAV4s from dealers for development work.

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'If I don't get this settled before I die, my family are going to get nothing'

Gulf war syndrome: Dying veterans plan swift action against MoD to protect their families

IAN BURRELL

Veterans dying from conditions associated with so-called Gulf war syndrome plan quickfire individual legal actions against the Ministry of Defence because they fear they will not survive long enough for a collective action to be brought.

More than 1,000 veterans have registered legal claims against the MoD since the end of the war in 1991.

The collective action may not reach the courts for several years but 26 veterans have already died and dozens more are now critically ill.

Captain Ian Hill, from Manchester, said he would be dead this time next year and that his family might lose possible compensation if he died before getting to court. "I have got to think of my family for when I am dead and gone. If I don't get this settled before I die they are going to get nothing."

Capt Hill, 50, a father of four, is suffering from neurological damage, emphysema and chronic breathing difficulties.

His wife Carol, a registered nurse, has repeatedly had to revive him after he has stopped breathing during the night. "I have to kick-start him by giving him a thump in the chest," she said. "One of these nights, I am not going to be able to do it."

Capt Hill, who is chairman of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association, was passed "A1 fit" by army doctors when he left for the Gulf in 1990. His responsibility was to set up the operating theatres to treat casualties of war, but he ended up being the first patient when he became sick after the hospital tents were sprayed with organophosphate pesticides (OPs). He was airlifted back to Britain where his condition has steadily deteriorated.

His wife said: "We have come



Gulf casualties: Capt Ian Hill and his wife Carol. Inset: Capt Flynn White, who died last month. Photograph: Martin Rickett

to terms with the fact that this time next year we doubt very much whether he will be alive.

The collective case and all the tests that are being planned will all be too late. They might help those who have 15 years to live but they won't help those that are dying now. Ian wants to speak while he is still here.

The MoD, which denies the existence of Gulf war syndrome, appeared to soften its position this month with an admission that OPs had been used more than was previously believed.

The Government has now commissioned research into

the protection that was given to those coming into contact with OPs and the likely damage caused by the pesticides.

By the time the results are ready many more veterans may have died.

Captain Flynn White, 31, died last month just 13 days before the MoD announcement.

He had been sent to the Gulf within days of graduating from Sandhurst. His mother Angela said: "As far as we know he was in perfect health. I think that whatever it was [that caused his illness] happened in the Gulf because he was certainly

not as well when he came back."

Capt White, who had a wife and young child, was afflicted by a mysterious draining of his energy which he fought against.

His mother said: "He battled hard against what he thought was lethargy and he did enormous amounts of fitness training to get back on track."

However, his efforts in the gym produced no discernible improvement and he began to feel unstable on his feet. He lodged a legal claim with the MoD reporting a long list of symptoms including fatigue, diarrhoea, anxiety and loss of bal-

ance. In April 1994, he was diagnosed by doctors as having a brain tumour.

His mother said she would never know the actual cause of his illness. "His own view was that it was something that happened in the Gulf," she said.

Capt White joins a growing list of Gulf veterans who have died young. Cpl Peter Gowans died from chronic myeloid leukaemia three weeks ago at the age of 29; Cpl Gary Graham died in May at the age of 31, from a tumour of the spine; Pte Simon Bottrell, 30, died in June last year from lymphoma;

Mark Almond, 27, a senior air-craftsman, died of cancer in November 1992; L/Cpl Robert Robins, 25, died of a suspected brain haemorrhage in February 1991 after phoning home to say his Gulf war inoculations were giving him headaches.



Equality chief berates 'cynical' companies

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality yesterday revealed years of frustration with the white establishment when he registered his "cynicism" over the high-minded pronouncements of government and business leaders.

Herman Ousley denounced an paper by the CBI on the busi-

ness case for equal opportunities - *A Winning Strategy* - as "yet another initiative in a long line of initiatives". Speaking at the launch of the document at the CBI's central London offices, Mr Ousley also attacked the Government for the ethnic mix on its nationwide "new apprenticeship" scheme. He said that only 2 per cent of the participants in the first year of the scheme were black, which

amounted to a "disgrace". And, after 20 years of equal opportunities legislation, projects and initiatives, more than 62 per cent of black males in London were out of work, he said.

Research by the commission in the north of England and Scotland found that black people invariably encountered prejudice when applying for jobs. Applicants from ethnic minorities were frequently told jobs had

been taken - while white applicants often found the same posts still vacant. The same occurred in accommodation searches. Even supposedly strong supporters of equal opportunities in the private sector had proved unsuccessful. John Moores, director of Littlewoods, had failed to secure an ethnic balance in his pools and mail order business, despite a 30-year aim to do so, Mr Ousley said.

Yesterday, the CBI conceded its own practices were far from perfect. About 58 per cent of CBI employees are women, mostly employed in the lower clerical grades. Just one woman is head of a CBI department.

Only 6.4 per cent of staff are from ethnic minorities; and 0.3 per cent are disabled.

The CRE chairman said that companies such as BA, Ford,

Vauxhall and Mercury - all with progressive policies - had been forced to make "corporate climbdowns" in the past 12 months over their advertising and promotional material.

Kamlesh Bahl, chairwoman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, welcomed the CBI's document, but warned companies that unless they embraced equal opportunities, they were on a "suicidal path".

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news

WHOSE BOOM?



Revenues from privatisation and oil have disguised Britain's bankruptcy for years. However, if borrowing targets are to be met into the next century, politicians will have to either raise taxes or severely shrink the Welfare State



Empty coffers: Universities demand more but there is little to be had. Britain is bankrupt, according to official figures Photograph: Brian Harris

Broke Britain lives now, but must pay later

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The British Government is bankrupt, according to official figures. Over the years it has cut taxes without holding back its spending, using privatisation revenues and North Sea oil to disguise the fundamental problem.

But, in the short term, Kenneth Clarke is probably going to strike it lucky with the booming economy helping to trim the Government's month-by-month borrowing figures. There is little danger that the state of the public finances will prevent the Chancellor reducing

tax by a penny or two in next month's Budget.

The short-run improvement will help politicians avoid really difficult questions during the election campaign. Andrew Dilnot, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which co-produces the annual Green Budget, says: "The real challenge is the long-term balance between public and private sector activity."

He does not think there is a danger of the incoming government having to raise taxes soon after the election, as long as the pace of growth holds up as expected next year. "As long as there is nothing outrageously profligate in this Budget, the Government's fiscal position looks ... reasonable," he said.

According to the Treasury's latest published forecasts, the public-sector borrowing requirement - the gap between public expenditure and tax revenues - will be £26.9bn in the current financial year and £23.1bn next year. This 1997 shortfall would be just low enough for Britain to qualify for the European single currency.

Other economists reckon these forecasts are on the cautious side, the Treasury having been stung by criticism of its earlier overoptimism. Revenues from corporation tax and value-added tax in the year to March turned out to be £3bn lower

than predicted only a few months earlier, perhaps partly because of companies' growing skill at avoidance measures.

Since March, tax revenues have been rolling in thanks to the recovery. The Budget is likely to show future borrowing that is the same or better than the last Treasury forecast, with government finances balancing by the turn of the century.

The big question, however, will be whether this government and the next can deliver on tough spending plans. The existing plans call for little growth in real terms in public spending, with its share of gross domestic product falling from 42 per cent last year to less than 39 per cent in 1998-99.

This requires the public sector to turn on a stopcock and reverse the trend of the past half century. As Mr Dilnot puts it: "I think the Chancellor will announce very tight spending plans. If they are to be hit there will be a great deal of pain in the public sector, with a complete rethinking of public provision. If they are not hit, taxes will have to go up."

The party political jousting next month will focus on the headline cuts in income tax in the 26 November Budget. But the hidden agenda is the shape of government we are willing to pay for in the next century.

Public sector workers keep fragile peace

DAVID WALKER

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is usually punctuated by the agonised screams of teachers, doctors, civil servants and council employees who have been tipped off about how much less the Government proposes to spend on them during the year to come.

But this autumn the silence is deafening. Despite Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, warning public employees there will be no extra money for pay rises, despite the Government's affirmation that total public spending can rise by only half a per cent next year, the usual parade of "bleeding stumps" is missing.

True, the head of the Prison Service has complained publicly about the gap between the cost of accommodating the rising numbers of prisoners and the finance allocated to jails. University vice-chancellors, too, have been muttering ominously. Unless more is allocated them, especially for capital spending, they have threatened to impose "top-up" fees on students.

But all in all public spending is far less of a problem than might have been predicted. One reason is that just before and after the last election there was a (politically useful) spurge. Between 1991-92 and

1995-96 spending rose by almost 2 per cent a year in real terms. Since then a new system of control through a Cabinet committee chaired by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, seems to have been effective in keeping outlays inside planned totals.

Another reason is that the pay of public employees has largely kept up with the private sector - but the Government has been able to accommodate the increases by gradually whittling away at the total numbers employed, for example through contracting out services.

But how long will this autumn's relative peacefulness persist? The answer depends on how tightly the Government sticks to its ambition of pushing downwards the proportion of national output that moves in and out of government coffers. It wants by the century's end to push this figure down to 38 per cent, from its current level between 42 and 43 per cent (about the same as when the Tories took office in 1979). That will require real pressure.

But a growing proportion of all spending is in health and education where where people seem to want more, not less, spent. Moderate growth in health spending could very easily come to look like cuts.

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DAILY POEM

Poem for a Man with No Sense of Smell

By Kate Clanchy

This is simply to inform you:

that the thickest line in the kink of my hand
smells like the feel of an old school desk,
the deep carved names worn sleek with sweat;

that beneath the spray of my expensive scent
my armpits sound a bass note strong
as the boom of a palm on a kettle drum;

that the wet flush of my fear is sharp
as the taste of an iron pipe, midwinter,
on a child's hot tongue, and that sometimes,

in a breeze, the delicate hairs on the nape
of my neck, just where you might bend
your head, might hesitate and brush your lips,

hold a scent frail and precise as a fleet
of tiny origami ships, just setting out to sea.

Kate Clanchy last week won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection for her splendid *Slatters* (Chatto, £6.99). Sharp, pungent and sensual, Clanchy's verse explodes on the palate in a series of intimate, and sometimes wry, vignettes of memory, love and loss. Born in Glasgow in 1965, she was educated in Edinburgh and Oxford and now teaches in the East End of London.

مكتبة من الأصل

Middle East: King's visit underlines Arab unity in demand for Israeli withdrawal from Hebron

Hussein returns in peace to West Bank

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jericho

King Hussein returned to the West Bank yesterday for the first time since the Jordanian army was defeated here by Israel in 1967. He landed by helicopter on the outskirts of Jericho, the autonomous Palestinian enclave, accompanied by Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

The purpose of the meeting in Jericho was to underline Arab solidarity in demanding that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, fulfil the Oslo accords by withdrawing from most of Hebron. "I am happy to be on Palestinian land," said King Hussein at a joint press conference. "We will support our brothers by all means."

Palestinians lining the main road in Jericho, a sleepy town of 20,000 in the Jordan valley which gained autonomy in 1994, looked pleased that King Hussein was among them. Amil Amar, a local doctor, said: "It is better to have friends than enemies on your side. Unfortunately the Americans are always with Israel."

Majid Awali, a photographer specialising in portraits and passport photographs, said: "At least the Arabs are getting united." A number of photographs on the wall of his shop showed young men in Jericho, some in uniform, posing with sub-

machine-guns or pistols. He agreed this could not have happened before the Israelis left in 1994, adding: "Before, people used to fight the Israelis with stones, but now Palestinians have 40,000 guns. We feel safer, more confident."

As King Hussein and Mr Arafat drove speedily into town in a motorcade, bystanders said they thought that Mr Netanyahu would, eventually, withdraw from Hebron, but would otherwise concede little to the Palestinians. Ibrahim Balo, a middle-aged pharmacist, said: "Netanyahu will give us nothing on Jerusalem, withdrawal from the West Bank, Israeli settlements, Palestinian refugees or our own state."

Conversations in the streets of Jericho were probably not very different from those taking place inside Mr Arafat's headquarters. At the press conference the Palestinian leader suggested, somewhat maliciously since there is nothing Mr Netanyahu is less likely to accept, that an international force protect the 400 Israeli settlers in Hebron "with the participation of the American army".

In any case, it is the rivalry between Mr Arafat and King Hussein for political control of the West Bank, which Jordan seized in 1948 and annexed in 1951. Although the King formally renounced his rights during the Palestinian intifada



Brothers in arms: King Hussein of Jordan (left) with Yasser Arafat, before their talks at the PLO leader's office in Jericho yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

(uprising), the Palestinian leadership remains suspicious that Israel would like to use him to minimise their authority on the West Bank. For the moment, however, Mr Netanyahu's belligerence has forced the two rivals together.

The Jericho talks threw into

confusion the formal Israeli-Palestinian negotiations which were meant to resume in Tabat in Egypt yesterday. Palestinians say little progress is being made, while Israel says agreement is not far off.

The overall shape of a compromise appears to be emerging whereby Palestinian police will only carry pistols, not rifles, on the hills overlooking the Israeli settlements and in buffer zones. Hot pursuit by Israeli forces will only happen when accompanied by Palestinian police.

Mr Netanyahu's ability to

string out the withdrawal from Hebron, which he had been doing since he won the election in May, has been reduced by his decision to open the tunnel in Jerusalem which provoked fighting in which 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed.

Mr Arafat's position was

strengthened. "Palestinians discovered they have a new weapon," Danny Rubenstein, a specialist on the Palestinians, writes. "They can synthesise elements of civil disobedience in intifada style and the use of live weapons by the Palestinian forces."

Court orders retrial of SS killer

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

An Italian appeal court last night annulled the trial of Erich Priebke, the former SS captain involved in the 1944 massacre of Jews and resistance fighters at the Ardeatine Caves, outside Rome, ruling that the original trial judge had been biased from the outset and ordering the proceedings to start again from scratch.

The Court of Cassation accepted evidence by families of the victims that Judge Agostino Quistelli of the Military Court had decided to go easy on Priebke before the case came before him this summer.

In July, Judge Quistelli found Priebke guilty of murder but exonerated him from a jail sentence because his crimes were not grave enough to circumvent the normal statute of limitations.

The Ardeatine Caves massacre, in which 335 men and boys were shot dead in retaliation for a partisan attack on an SS unit, is considered the supreme symbol of Nazi barbarity during the German occupation of Italy, and the verdict against Priebke was condemned by the entire establishment right up to the President.

Because of this, Priebke was never let out of jail, with the excuse that he must stay behind bars pending proceedings to extradite him to Germany. Lawyers for the victims' families unearthed a tape-recording in which Judge Quistelli was heard to call the massacre "an old story" that did not deserve the severe approach most Italians were clamouring for.

The lawyers had presented similar evidence, incriminating both the judge and the prosecution, during the trial but had their petition for a retrial turned down on that occasion. It is not clear if Priebke will go before the Military Court again or if the case will be transferred to a common-crime tribunal.

Slovenes say they are the ideal recruits for Nato

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Slovenia's Foreign Minister, Davorin Kracun, predicted yesterday that his country would be among the first group of Central and East European countries to join Nato.

Speaking in London before talks with the Foreign and Defence Secretaries, Malcolm Rifkind and Michael Portillo, Mr Kracun said Slovenia's bid for membership aroused less concern in Russia than the applications of other former Communist countries, because the former Yugoslav republic of 2 million people had never been in Moscow's sphere of influence.

"We expect to be in the first wave of enlarging Nato," he

said. "Slovenia fulfils all the conditions for membership in Nato. Slovenia is a stable democracy, has democratic control of the armed forces, and has no disputes with neighbours that we could describe as security risks." Referring mainly to Russia, he added: "Slovenia is among the candidates for Nato membership that are less irritating to those countries that don't see their future in the Nato framework. Slovenia has never been in the Soviet sphere of interest."

Slovenia, the most prosperous and liberal of the six republics of former Yugoslavia, secured independence in 1991 after a brief but bloody war against the Serbian-led Yugoslav army. The country managed to avoid any involvement in the conflicts in both Croatia and Bosnia, and its chief foreign-policy goals since independence have been to join Nato and the European Union and to integrate itself completely with the West.

Nato is expected to issue invitations for membership next year to a limited number of former Communist countries. The Czech Republic, Hungary,



Poland and Slovakia are widely considered to be the front-runners for inclusion in the alliance, a process that Nato would like to complete in time for its 50th anniversary in April 1999.

Mr Kracun said that, from Nato's point of view, one of the attractions of admitting Slovenia was that it would ensure that Hungary, an important prospective member of the alliance, would not be geographically cut off from the rest of Nato.

"There is a natural connection between northern Italy and Hungary that goes through Slovenia, enabling Nato to have

a link with Hungary on land," he said.

This particular problem would not arise if Slovakia, which links Hungary with the Czech Republic, were considered likely to be in Nato's first wave of enlargement.

However, Slovakia's chances of early Nato membership have dimmed because of doubts among Western governments over the quality of democracy and civil rights under Slovakia's Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar.

The geographical case for admitting Slovenia appears rather more compelling than the purely military one, since the country's armed forces are only 15,000 strong. Mr Kracun said that Slovenia spent 1.7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on defence.

Anti-military sentiment among young Slovenes was one of the main forces propelling Slovenia towards independence in the late 1980s but Mr Kracun pointed out that this feeling was directed against the Serbian-led, Communist army. He noted that Slovenia now provided logistical support for Nato's peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.



Who is Cordelia in a wildly chaotic land? Page 12

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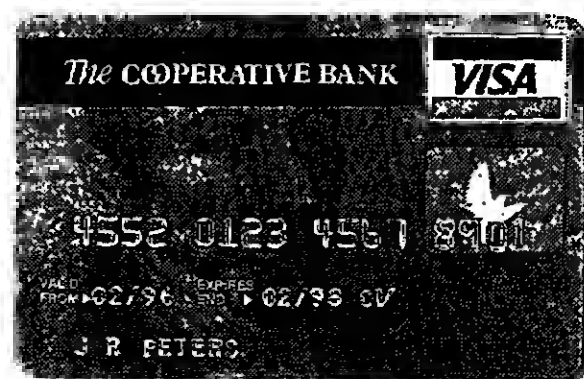
The recently published book, *OpJB*, is an account of how Ian Fleming and Christopher Creighton, the book's author, led an expedition that brought Martin Barmann, Hitler's Secretary, to England at the war's end. The book has been the centre of sensational controversy. Barmann, as the sole executor of Hitler's will played an essential part in the disposal of Nazi assets in Swiss Banks. Barmann's authority to release such assets was the reason the Allies wanted him in England. This is a matter of supreme historical importance. In the interests of truth, a reward is hereby being made of

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international

Father's daughter who holds key to political destiny of Mother Russia

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

One of the sharper analogies used to describe Russia these days is that of "King Lear": an ill and ageing potentate presiding over a wildly chaotic land, while his daughters – or, in this case, his daughter – stealthily assume control.

The comparison is unfair to Tatyana Dyachenko, Mr Yeltsin's youngest child, who, though no Cordelia, has shown no sign of the greedy ambition of the mad king's other two offspring. Yet no list of Russia's most powerful political figures can now be considered complete without her name.

In the three months since her father was re-elected, she has become a key figure in his own administration, quietly working to hold it together in a period of economic and social strife and ferocious political infighting. Some Russians have even begun to see her, rather than the president's wife, Naina, as the first lady of the Kremlin.

Apart from a few brief, edited, television clips, Mr Yeltsin has remained out of sight while he prepares for his heart operation. Although he has held official meetings, fired off decrees, and communicated with a disillusioned country by radio address, he has become an absentee leader, ruling uneasily from his sanatorium. Masterminding this delicate operation day-to-day is his chief-of-staff and erstwhile privatisation guru, Anatoly Chubais. But alongside him works the 36-year-old Tatyana.

"She is the one who influences her father most," complained a former Kremlin insider, Valery Strelets, yesterday in an interview in *Moskovski Komsomolets* news-

paper. "She and Chubais block access to the president. They do not let anyone near him." His remarks were the latest instalment in a complex scandal that has erupted as Russia's ruling clans grapple for power in the president's absence.

For days, allegations of embezzlement, attempted murder, and blackmail have been flying. They centre on the activities of the murky National Sports Foundation, but they are also thought to be part of an elaborate attempt by Mr Chubais (and therefore Tatyana) to discredit his arch-enemy, General Alexander Korzhakov, Mr Yeltsin's former chief bodyguard, who has been accused of trying to extort \$40m. The motive is simple: to undermine the popular Alexander Lebed, an ally of Korzhakov, who wants to be the next president.

And, although almost every detail of the scandal is disputed, no one disagrees with the broad claim that Mr Yeltsin's daughter is an active player in the power game. "She is a link between the president and Mr Chubais," said Viktor Kremenjuk, a political analyst. "The two work very closely together."

Tatyana Dyachenko first became actively involved in politics in February after pointing out to her father that his election campaign was in trouble. He overhauled his team and invited her to join it, which she did, despite having just given birth to her second son – the older one, 15-year-old Boris, is at Millfield in Somerset. Before long she was the chief go-between between the campaign staff and the president.

A mathematician by training, she is quieter and less volatile than her father, but she can be tough and strong-willed. "When she said no to something, be-

cause the president didn't want it, that was it. It meant no. She had a very powerful veto," said Vyacheslav Nikonov, who worked on the campaign.

When there was bad news, she was the only one who knew how to break it to her father. She showed a sharp instinct for presentation – a valuable asset in an election where television proved important. It was she who persuaded Mr Yeltsin's guards to stop wearing sunglasses because they looked too thuggish.

To date, she has remained largely behind the scenes, mindful, perhaps of the unpopularity of Raisa Gorbachev, whose bejewelled presence in the limelight irritated many Russians. But when 17 children were killed when a bus crashed with a train in the southern city of Rostov last month, it was she who flew to the region as the president's representative.

The question now exercising Kremlin watchers is what is her ultimate motive? Does she covet high office, or is she merely a loyal daughter, helping a troubled father? "What she cares about is her father's place in history," said Mr Nikonov. "She has shown no sign of having political ambitions of her own." But it is hard to be so sure. She is, after all, a Yeltsin.

Fresh doubts about Mr Yeltsin's bypass operation arose yesterday with a report that he was suffering from low haemoglobin levels in his blood. The claim was made by Echo Moskvy radio station, which said the problem was such that few surgeons would recommend an operation in the foreseeable future. It was denied by the Kremlin, which said that preparations for the operation were "going according to plan".



Power behind the throne: Tatyana Dyachenko, who was instrumental in reviving her father's faltering election campaign and is now 'the one who influences him most'. Photograph: AP

French news strike greets budget cuts

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French government presented its 1997 budget to parliament yesterday – the crucial one that determines whether France will meet the criteria for joining a single European currency by the planned 1999 start. Although so much depended on yesterday's figures, however, there was precious little drama of the sort that surrounds Budget day in Britain.

Most of the measures, from the Fr60bn (£7.3) worth of savings to Fr25bn worth of tax cuts were known in advance, thanks to a heavy programme of advance publicity by the government. Even if there had been any shocks, though, they would have gone largely unreported. The majority of the strongly unionised journalists were on strike for the day in protest against a clause of the tax package that would phase out special allowances for professional groups, including themselves.

Television news programmes were emasculated, the state monopoly news agency, Agence France Presse, produced a bare diet of foreign news, and the 24-hour news radio station played music. Few, if any, of today's newspapers are likely to appear.

The government's advance presentation had been designed to limit public resistance to inevitable spending cuts. Reports in early summer of the tens of thousands of jobs that would have to be cut in the public sector were attenuated by early autumn to 5,600, a figure confirmed yesterday. The prime minister, Alain Juppé, went on television six weeks ago to "sell" the start of the year "tax-reduction programme". The response was cynical, but the government pressed on.

Introducing the budget bill yesterday, Jean Arthuis, the Economy Minister, and the Budget Minister, Alain Lamassoure, stressed the efforts being made

to reduce the budget deficit to the Maastricht-required 3 per cent of gross domestic product, the "better targeting" of aid for jobs (actually taking a severe cut), and the levels of spending being maintained. They said that the biggest savings would come from lower debt repayments (because of lower interest rates) and from the next year's net zero contribution to the European Union budget because of "good management".

The budget, Mr Arthuis said, "goes as far as is possible without jeopardising social cohesion". Some modest tax cuts are planned for next year, at the extremes of the tax system, but the plight of the journalists illustrates the difficulties of reforming France's outdated and complex tax system.

Under a measure introduced in 1934 to help impecunious freelancers, journalists were awarded a 30 per cent tax exemption that has persisted ever since. Although the benefit has acquired a ceiling of Fr30,000, the beneficiaries now treat the concession as a right.

Madrid — Hundreds of thousands of Spanish trade unionists held a nationwide day of protest against government austerity measures yesterday, in the first big mobilisation since the conservative Popular Party came to power last March.

The day of action was launched by students, teachers and parents in a midday demonstration outside the Education Ministry in Madrid against what unions called "a savage attack by the government on public education". Yesterday evening 2 million public-sector workers took to the streets throughout Spain in opposition to a freeze for public employees. The government insists the measures are necessary to make Spain ready for a single European currency in 1999. Union bosses meet tomorrow to decide on further action, which could include a general strike.

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Dole may go for the jugular in California

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Bob Dole is warming up for today's vital San Diego debate with Bill Clinton with what aides said would be his most biting attack yet on the ethics record of the President and his administration amid strong signs that he will after all make California the centrepiece of his struggling bid for the White House.

Under mounting pressure from his political advisers to strike hard and even low if necessary, Mr Dole has daily been edging closer to a frontal assault on the character issue. The menu, moreover, is certainly rich - ranging from the dispute over improper White House access to FBI personnel files to Mr Clinton's apparent refusal to rule out presidential pardons for associates convicted in the Whitewater affair, and now the controversy over campaign contributions to the Democrats from Indonesian business figures.

A speech yesterday in San Diego was set to be a foretaste of what Mr Clinton could expect in the "town-hall" debate at the city's university tonight.

If the candidate is now to take off the gloves, then the reaction of most Republican activists is "and about time too".

With only three weeks left before voting day, and a daunting lead to overcome, party strategists are dismayed how in the two previous debates neither Mr Dole nor his running-mate, Jack Kemp, have taken opportunities served up on a platter to go after Mr Clinton on the terrain where they believe he is most vulnerable.

But whether the new strategy will work is another matter. Mr Dole is a prisoner of his own image and gen-



High hopes: Bob Dole with his campaign plane in Kansas City before he set off for California and the debate with Bill Clinton

Photograph: Jim Bourg/Reuters

eration. Try as he might to appear otherwise, he continues to come across as a loveable but slightly curmudgeonly grandfather padding around the country in carpet slippers.

He appears decent and upright to

be sure, compared to the slippery Mr Clinton, but somehow Mr Dole is a man who is living more in the past than the future.

The risk is, as every political commentator is quick to point out, that if he does go negative, Mr Dole

may further disenchant the voters who have long since signalled that they are fed up with mud-slinging.

The tactics too can only rekindle the image of the "mean" Bob Dole of elections past, the joyless hatchet-man who fell to unlament-

ed defeat in his two previous White House bids in 1980 and 1988.

But with desperation creeping into their calculations, the campaign seems to have concluded there is nothing to lose.

So too have the American media,

hardly less desperate to inject some excitement and controversy into a contest whose dynamics have not changed a whit since early summer.

With public interest thus far minimal - audiences for the two televised debates thus far down by 40

per cent on their 1992 counterparts - scarcely a day passes without a spate of front-page headlines wondering when Mr Dole will raise the ethics question. Indeed, the "E-word" has now supplanted the liberal "L-word" for pride of place in American political jargon.

But "going ethical" is not the only quandary facing the Dole campaign as it scrambles to decide how best to use the candidate's money and time in the 20 days remaining until 5 November.

The word now is that despite opposition from some advisers, California will be a top priority target, even if that means devoting less attention to traditionally pivotal industrial and Midwestern states such as New Jersey, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

But the logic is clear. No Republican has won the presidency without carrying California, whose 54 electoral-college votes alone are a fifth of the 270 needed for victory. A month ago, Mr Dole's task seemed impossible.

But the campaign is taking fresh heart from an opinion poll by the respected Field organisation showing Mr Clinton's lead in the state has come down from an unassailable 20 point or more to just 10 - smaller than the President's advantage nation-wide.

Another factor has been intense pressure from Republicans on Capitol Hill, led by Newt Gingrich, not to abandon California.

Deprived of a strong top-of-the-ticket presence in the state, Mr Gingrich fears the party could lose several of its 27 Congressional seats next month, imperilling both the Republicans' current slim majority in the House of Representatives and his own tenure as Speaker.

China warns Hong Kong over escaped dissidents

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Peking has accused the United States and Hong Kong governments of encouraging dissidents to flee China after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, in which several hundred pro-democracy demonstrators died.

Shen Guofang, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, yesterday confirmed that the leading dissident Wang Nizhe had slipped out of China into Hong

Kong. He is now believed to be in San Francisco. China usually turns a blind eye to the escape of dissidents, being reluctant to highlight their departure and often glad to be rid of them. But Mr Shen's remarks suggest a change of attitude which, he hinted, was prompted by Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese rule next year.

It is clear that the British colony's traditional role as a centre for asylum seekers will end next July, Mr Shen said. "I am sure Hong Kong will become an

international financial, economic and trade centre. It will not be a centre for other things".

Tung Chi-wah, the leading contender for the post of Chief Executive of the new Hong Kong government under Chinese sovereignty, yesterday made a rare statement on policy, saying he was sure the territory would forge an extradition agreement with China, and, if he were Chief Executive, he would "act according to the law", meaning that political fugitives would be handed over.

The colony has, historically, given refuge to some of Asia's leading revolutionaries, including Sun Yat Sen, who founded the Chinese republic, and Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietnamese revolution.

Referring to those who have given shelter to Chinese dissidents, Mr Shen said: "We hope the countries concerned will not have the slightest ambiguity in cracking down on illegal and secret immigration". He accused Mr Wang and his "plotter" of "illegally and secretly crossing

the border". Mr Wang is one of the last internationally known dissidents to be either at liberty or still in China. He was first jailed in 1974 after putting up a wall poster in Guangzhou, southern China, which protested at repression in the last years of Mao Tse-tung's rule. He was re-arrested in 1981 on charges of spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda and forming an opposition group. According to Robin Munro, of the US-based Human Rights Watch Asia, China has effectively

snuffed out dissident activity in recent years, leaving only a handful of active opposition leaders. Wang Dan, one of the best-known former student activists from the Tiananmen protests, is likely to go on trial again this week. He is charged with the capital offence of subversion.

Because there are so few active Chinese dissidents at large it seems strange the government should suddenly raise the spectre of an international plot to aid those trying to escape.

It is estimated that up to 800 dissidents have been smuggled out since 1989, mostly by the Hong Kong-based Operation Yellow Bird underground railway, whose existence is well known to China.

Only once, in 1990, did the government kick up a fuss about asylum seekers fleeing to Hong Kong. This was when the swimming champion Yan Yan refused to leave the colony when returning from an international competition. China demanded that Britain hand him

over and threatened reprisals if he failed to return. He was, however, allowed to go to Taiwan.



Where the centuries have been peeled back. Page 14

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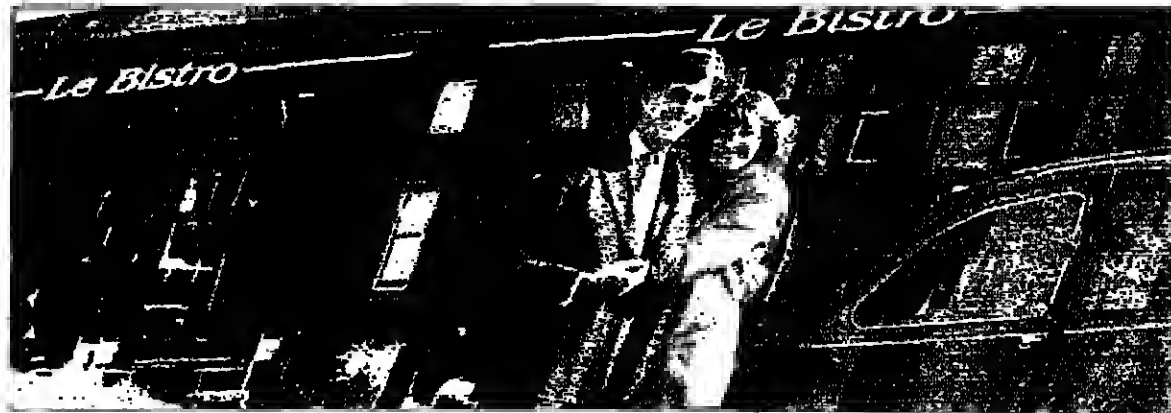
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international

Cradle of Spanish theatre restored



Miguel de Cervantes: Spain's greatest writer, born in Alcalá de Henares, site of Europe's first popular open-air theatre

ELIZABETH NASH
Alcalá de Henares

Two inquisitive drama students stepped into a crumbling former cinema in a town just outside Madrid and after years of painstaking labour, uncovered Europe's first popular open-air commercial theatre, dating from 1601.

Unlike its equivalent, Shakespeare's Globe in London, which had to be rebuilt from scratch, the Cervantes Theatre at Alcalá de Henares, whose 15-year restoration is nearing completion, was revealed by peeling away layer upon layer of accumulated theatrical history.

The discovery, in the home town of Spain's greatest writer, Miguel de Cervantes, has left Globe enthusiasts breathless with admiration: "It is a remarkable treasure of which we are deeply envious," said the director of education at the Globe, Patrick Spottiswoode, following a visit to the theatre at Alcalá earlier this month. The Globe's chief academic adviser, Andrew Gurr, hailed the Spanish discovery as "the most tan-

gible representation of the history of European theatre that there is."

Miguel Angel Coso, now a director of the Cervantes Theatre, said he had no idea what he would find when he and Juan Sanz first peeped into the darkened building in the spring of 1980, then being used as a warehouse. "Our first discovery was evidence of a Romantic theatre built in 1831 with a rare elliptical auditorium. But then we began to think that beneath this lay a much earlier *corral de comedias*, an open-air theatre built in the patio of the surrounding houses."

Historical allusions to such a theatre beside the town's ancient marketplace, now Cervantes Square, set the two students on a 16-year quest whose success owes much to Spain's centuries-long devotion to paperwork. "We found a document showing that a carpenter, Francisco Sanchez, obtained the town hall's permission in 1601 to build an open-air theatre on this site and that he paid a tax to ensure his was the only entry-paying

theatre in town. He wanted to make money from it," Mr Coso explains, as he steps carefully amid scaffolding and 17th-century timbers.

The theatre remained in use for some 370 years, although the local authorities closed it from time to time over the centuries because of plague, in deference to the death of a king, or following complaints from the university that students were spending too much time at plays and skirting their studies.

Documents record complaints of rowdy behaviour, shouting and brawling during performances and, in 1767, the unruly hauling of "oranges, sweets, apples, chestnuts and other things." Leather wine-bottles had to be banned, and smoking allowed only in corridors. Sometimes the army had to intervene to restore order.

Excavation beneath accumulated rubble and later additions confirmed the original patio had a cobbles floor for the groundlings, a separate balcony area for women, tiered lateral benches for men and private boxes for the well-to-do,

two of which remain. A few private boxes were accessible only from the neighbouring houses - the owners agreeing to trade their loss of use of the patio for what amounted to a gratis subscription to every performance.

Architects also uncovered an ancient well, to the amusement of one of Alcalá's local officials who on a recent visit recalled that no one liked sitting in that corner of the old cinema because it was always so chilly and damp.

"The minute I stepped inside, I could smell and hear the ghosts of people who had been there and played there. It's warm with layers of theatrical history," said Mr Spottiswoode yesterday.

Rich written evidence of construction contracts, actors' lives and theatre procedures uncovered by Mr Coso and Mr Sanz provided a priceless bonus, according to Professor Gurr. "We have so few documents and so much argument about them. They have done a superb job of retrieving the essentials of the original building with absolute fidelity."



Suharto's symbolism: The statue of 'Christ the King' unveiled by the President yesterday Photograph: AP

Suharto meets East Timor Nobel winner

ALI KOTARUMALOS
Associated Press Writer

Dili - President Suharto of Indonesia met East Timor's Nobel prize-winning bishop yesterday and defended his rule in the territory but never mentioned the 21-year fight to crush its independence movement.

The President, visiting East Timor to inaugurate a giant statue of Jesus Christ as a gesture of religious tolerance, shook hands with Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and took a helicopter ride with him. But the bishop said later that the two had little to say and the president did not mention the Nobel Peace Prize that he shared last Friday with the resistance leader Jose Ramos Horta for their opposition to Indonesia's domination of the former Portuguese colony.

Indonesia annexed East Timor in 1976. As many as 260,000 people were killed by military action, disease or starvation in the first five years of Indonesian

rule. Human rights groups say Indonesian troops have tortured, beaten and killed civilians in attempts to stifle separatist aspirations.

President Suharto, who ordered the 1975 invasion, was driven from the airport through streets cleared by security forces. In a speech outside the governor's office, he emphasized his government's achievements in building roads and schools and raising incomes in East Timor.

He struck a drum three times and signed plaques to inaugurate the 56ft black marble statue, a road, three bridges and a street named after his wife, Ibu Tien. "The construction of this statue shows that after East Timor became part of Indonesia, values that are religious and sacred continue to grow and expand," he said.

Mr Ramos Horta called the statue "a joke in poor taste". The visit was a stunt to signal Indonesian sovereignty, he said in Sydney, Australia.

significant shorts

Haider lays claim to the people's vote

A triumphant Jörg Haider yesterday claimed his far right Freedom Party was now a serious contender for power in Austria following the party's 27.6 per cent vote in the elections to the European parliament. Mr Haider said years spent trying to demonise him had failed and that his openly xenophobic party represented the genuine voice of the people. *Adrian Bridge*

Radiation fear in Belarus

Scientists have protested against plans to allow the Belarus military to destroy villages contaminated in 1986 by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. Radiologists said the military would cause fires and explosions, raising radiation levels 1,000 times above normal and spreading radioactive dust up to 25 miles away. The plan to have the military fire on the homes with tanks and raze the villages was broached by President Alexander Lukashenko. *AP*

Dinosaur steps take a walk

The world's only known set of fossilised Stegosaurus footprints, left by a dinosaur about 130 million years ago, have been stolen from sacred aboriginal land north of Broome in Western Australia. The Kimberley Land Council said the theft was discovered last week and power tools must have been used to remove the prints. "The footprints have great spiritual significance for our people," Joseph Roe, the custodian of the site, said. *AP*

Showdown for communists on "sweeteners"

The head of the French Communist Party, Robert Hue, and his predecessor, the unapologetic Stalinist, Georges Marchais, are to be questioned in connection with a long-running corruption scandal related to party funding. The case centres on allegations that a company linked to the Communist Party accepted "sweeteners" totalling Fr13bn from the giant Compagnie Generale des Eaux, which received building contracts by return. *Mary Dejevsky Paris*

Muslim women on the move

The Saudi monarch King Fahd wishes to increase job opportunities for women. The country is trying to reduce its reliance on expatriate workers, who account for about a third of the 17 million inhabitants. Saudi women are banned from jobs that may bring them into contact with men who are not close relatives. *AP Jeddah*

Cologne's peace wall demolished

Germany's best-known pacifist monument, the "Wailing Wall" of Cologne, was demolished on Monday. The cardboard bricks, bearing messages denouncing violence, sprung up during the Gulf war, and was a focus for resistance to German participation in a Bosnian peace-keeping force. *Ina Karas*

Baby Madonna

The pop singer Madonna, 38, yesterday gave birth to a girl. Lourdes Maria Cecile Leon, was born at Goud Samaritan Hospital. *John Lytle, page 16*

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THERE WEREN'T EVEN
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DISPATCHES
THURSDAYS 9PM



'The Loss of the Marchioness' 8.10.93

By revealing crucial new evidence in the sinking of the pleasure boat, Dispatches forced the reopening of the inquest into the victims' tragic deaths.

Another small step along the road to peace

Two steps back and one step forward. The IRA resumes its bombing campaign on the island of Ireland, and a week later a "breakthrough" in the peace process is announced. Confusing it may be, but contradictory it is not. Progress towards permanent peace in Northern Ireland is bound to be slow and stuttering, with plenty of pitfalls along the way. But it is still progress.

Right now the constraining factor is that politicians in Northern Ireland and Britain are in pre-election limbo. The short term pursuit of political support inevitably dominates the longer term negotiations for peace. In the circumstances, any progress – not least the deal David Trimble and John Hume came up with this week – is extremely heartening. It shows that there are votes, as well as lives, in peaceful negotiation rather than violence and belligerence.

The agreement between Trimble's Ulster Unionist party and Hume's SDLP over decommissioning has been a long time coming. Right from the start it was evident to all that the paramilitaries on both sides would not give up their weapons before talks began. Placing guns and bombs at the top of the talks agenda was at best a delaying tactic by the Unionists, at worst sabotage. The deal itself will not change much: the parties have agreed merely to disagree, and to set discussions of decommissioning alongside the main political talks. However, the fact of

agreement is a sign that things are moving in the right direction.

Until now, the Ulster Unionists have stuck with the hard line set by Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists: guns first, then talks. Curiously the IRA's reinstated bombing campaign has given Trimble more leeway in discussion with the moderate nationalists. So long as Sinn Féin is outside the talks (which is as long as the IRA goes on blowing people up) there is no risk that Trimble will be seen to be giving in to republican terrorists. Nevertheless, he is still talking to Northern Ireland Catholics. For Unionist and nationalist parties to be negotiating is vital, regardless of whether the paramilitaries are involved.

Even more cheering is the fact that Trimble and Hume have made this decision in this pre-election climate. Both face fierce competition for votes from the more extreme elements in their respective communities. And both have presumably made a calculated decision that they have votes to gain on this deal. In June, Hume's SDLP lost support to Sinn Féin during the elections to the Forum from which negotiating teams were drawn. Hume will be hoping that Sinn Féin's record 15.5 per cent share of the vote reflected direct support for Gerry Adams, and as such represented a vote for peace. Now that the IRA has shattered hopes of a ceasefire it must be hoped that much of that nationalist vote will return to the SDLP.



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Trimble, similarly, has to guard his flank against the Democratic Unionists. A vote for Paisley is a vote against any negotiations at all. By proceeding with talks now, Trimble is gambling that Protestant voters would rather have negotiations than stalemate. Trimble has followed Hume in making the leap of faith that voters prefer peace and compromise to conflict-ridden status quo. In next year's general election, the people of Northern Ireland will get their own chance to leap, and give their more moderate representatives a mandate for peace.

Between now and the election, how-

ever, further progress seems unlikely. The British government is equally bound by politics and the imminent election. John Major may not – yet – be directly beholden to the Unionists for support in Westminster. However he would be a brave man if he did anything to jeopardise Unionist votes in the Commons before an election. And the nationalists will inevitably have little confidence in his ability to act as an honest broker in the meantime.

But after the election? Surprisingly it is not so much a change of government that will make a difference to Northern Ireland as a strong government. Whether

it be Blair or Major led, the important thing for the peace process is that the government is not dependent on the support of one side of the troubled province. On the surface, a Blair government would probably adopt a similar approach to that pursued by Major. Labour has made a conscious effort to stick close to the Conservatives' official position on Northern Ireland. And Mo Mowlam, Labour's Northern Ireland spokeswoman, has gone to great lengths to build relationships with all sides.

Beneath the apparent consensus, however, an important underlying difference remains. The Tories start from the union; Labour doesn't. Of course John Major is willing to compromise to achieve a permanent peace, but his gut instinct is that the union should remain intact. Labour's base position is consistent. A Blair-led government is therefore more open to a framework which allows for material change in Northern Ireland's relationship to the rest of the UK, and to the Irish Republic.

But for the lifetime of the next government the broad brush approach of any party with a large enough majority is likely to be roughly the same. What may matter most is the commitment and time a new Prime Minister is prepared to devote to the troubles across the water. A fresh, enthusiastic Labour PM will have many matters to which he will want to devote attention: education, employment, and Europe

for a start. But he will need to keep his eye on the ball.

The best prospect for now is that the process begun by Major continues to stumble on, sometimes forwards, sometimes backwards, sometimes progressing, sometimes stalling. It will occasionally deliver. But every time it does, as it did the night before last, we move a pigeon step away from the political vacuum and violence that has plagued us all too long.

One for the road to employment

A year's free supply of best bitter for the Policy Studies Institute, which was commissioned by the Department of Education and Employment to look at factors marking men in long-term unemployment. It found that pub-goers who lose their jobs get back to work more quickly than non-drinkers. It's not the beer, but the conviviality. Along with suggestions for the 3.30 at Newmarket, the saloon bar is a good place to pick up tips about jobs. Another counter-intuitive finding is that men with a negative view of work fare better than those with a favourable line. Could it be that employers prefer bolder types who can't get away from work to the pub quick enough?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UK consumer recovery is built on sand

Sir: Diana Coyle ("Failure to invest could kill recovery", 15 October) is "not to argue that investment is the key to lasting recovery."

The situation is even more serious than she describes. It is now 17 quarters since Britain hit the trough of the recession. Total investment in the economy is just 6.5 per cent higher now than then. At the same point in the recovery after the 1981 recession it had risen by almost 25 per cent.

Worse still, investment in manufacturing is actually lower now than it was when Britain was in recession. Indeed it is lower now than in 1979.

With Britain's industries in the doldrums this consumer recovery is built on sand.

The truth is that the Tories have not got the fundamentals of our economy right. They have handed our economic competitors an enormous advantage by failing to invest in the new skills and technologies that are the key to future success.

We are 34th in the world skills league, we invest less in our industry than any of our major competitors and we have fallen from 13th to 18th place in the world prosperity league.

It will be for Labour to prepare our economy for the future by giving people of all ages the chance to improve their skills, putting unemployed young people back to work and encouraging investment in business.

Only then will Britain have a recovery that is meaningful – and that will last.
ALAN MILBURN MP
Darlington, Lab
Labour spokesman on Treasury and Economy Affairs
House of Commons
London SW17

Sir: In the recent spate of promises to clamp down on those who scrounge from the long-suffering taxpayer ("Yesterday at the conference", 10 October), one offender seems to have gone unnoticed. This is the employer who pays his employees a wage low enough to make them eligible for Family Income Support, paid from public money.

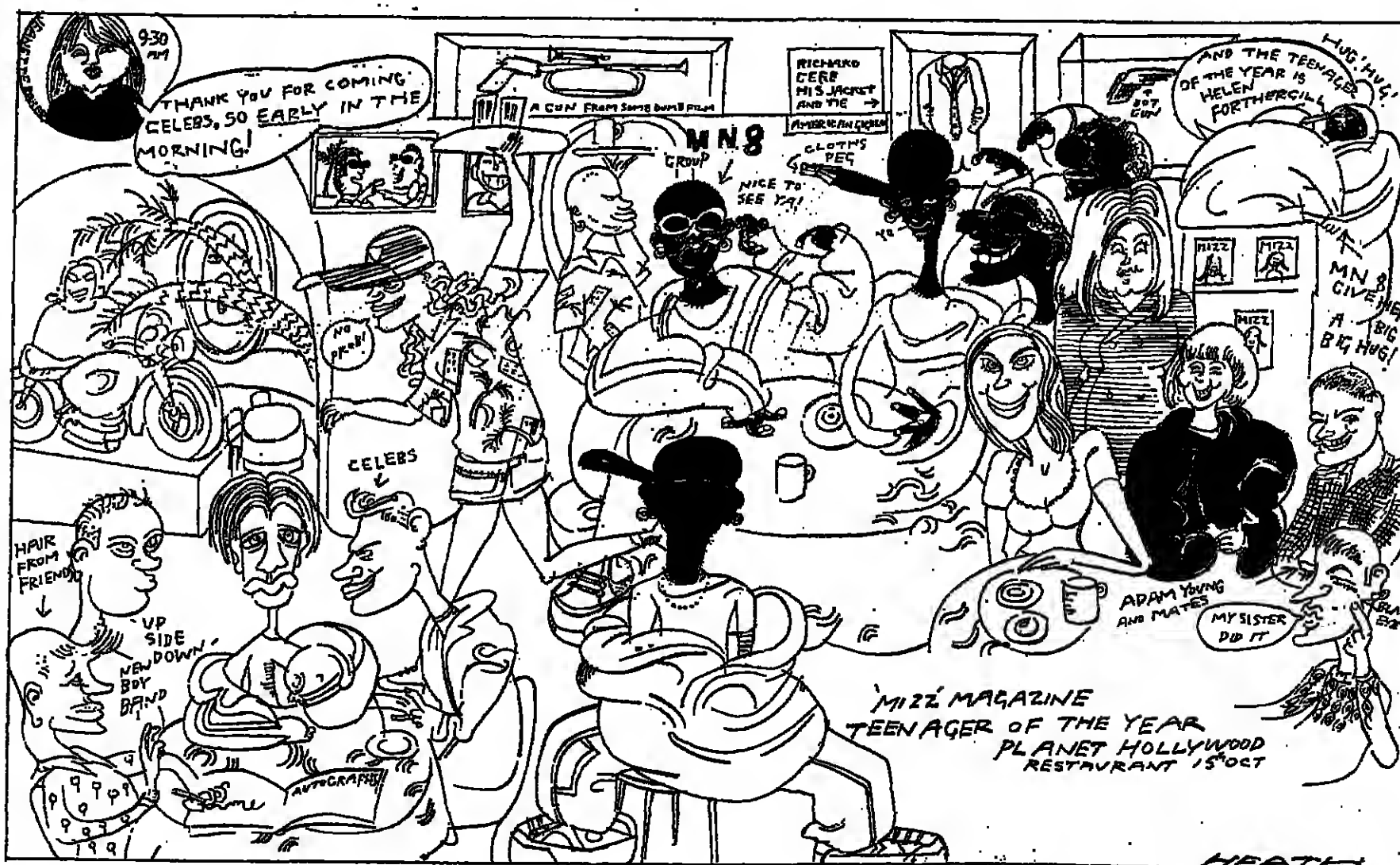
I suggest that the next Budget should include provision for taxation which would recover from such employers the supplement which we pay to raise people's income to the level required for the most basic needs.

Why should the taxpayer subsidise those entrepreneurs so inefficient that their companies can function only as sweat shops or so shameless that they allow the rest of us to help meet their wage bills?
LEONARD PRIDE
Cleckheaton,
West Yorkshire

Sir: At the Conservative Party conference, Peter Lilley extolled the success of the "hotline" enabling people to inform on social security fraudsters. Fine. However, I understand that even more money is lost to the Treasury by tax evasion.

Strange, therefore, that the Government has not set up a similar "hotline" to enable us to inform on tax evaders. I wonder why. Could it be that too many of these dodgers might turn out to be Conservative voters?

R.B. TAYLOR
Stowmarket,
Suffolk



Michael Heath's Britain: Magazine Award

Men's Hour? I'd run a mile

Sir: Save me from "Men's Hour" as advocated by Jack O'Sullivan (9 October). I'm a "stay at home dad" and look after the kids' dad, and the last thing I need is a radio programme telling how my penis works.

Seventy-five per cent of Woman's Hour seems to me to be about reproductive organs and nervous tension, that and eating disorders.

I've tried meeting other dads for coffee afternoons and it doesn't work – men are egotistical and cannot stand listening to other men telling them the story of their lives, let alone plumbing problems.

As for shaving foam, try shaving in the shower, using ordinary soap, and a razor blade lasts for months.
STEVE OLDFIELD
London W3

Our betrayal of St Helena

Sir: Another "colonial fight" remains to be won, apart from that in Hong Kong ("Fight the last colonial fight", Sir Christopher, 3 October).

As a recent visitor to the island of St Helena, I could not help but become aware of the sadness, even bitterness, among the people there that a promise by an English king, Charles II, that the "natives of St Helena are to be free denizens of England" has been broken, and that their rights of British citizenship have been removed.

Their case is succinctly put in the opening page of the report by the

on Citizenship, published this year: "A grave injustice has been done. Inadvertently, Great Britain has disowned some of her own citizens."

In 1659 the English took possession of and settled the uninhabited island of St Helena. In 1673, King Charles II confirmed by Royal Charter that the island was to be regarded in perpetuity as a detached part of England, and its inhabitants as among its citizens.

In 1833, an Act of Parliament misclassified St Helena as a colony, but did not repudiate the Royal Charter. In 1981, an Act of Parliament reinterpreted the 1833 Act, so that it did repudiate it.

I believe it would be right and proper if the citizenship of "The Saints" could be reviewed and their British citizenship restored.
DENYS WHATMORE
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Switch off crime

Sir: Michael Howard? The man's a genius. "No convicted felon will be allowed a driving licence" (report, 8 October) – even now I can hear those crime figures come crashing down. But why stop there?

Ban TV licences too. Surely the thought of no EastEnders or Coronation Street will cause the criminal element to reflect upon their wretched lives and realise that no crime would be worth the risk.
TOM CADEN
Sheffield,
South Yorkshire

The evidence for Surrey generosity

Sir: I suggest that Peter Popham, in his review of Surrey ("Down the A3 to the Middle Ages", 12 October), takes a look at himself when he uses the term "mean-minded". His citing of the tiresome 13-year-old schoolboy golfer, and his equally tiresome problem, was typical of the tabloid papers which *The Independent* professes to despise.

The article was incredibly one-sided. Has he been round the "real Surrey"? All that whingeing, smacking of the "have-nots" resenting the "haves" – Old and New Labour's "politics of envy".
NICHOLAS COX
Redhill, Surrey

Sir: Though no one would defend the incident that inspired Peter Popham to journey down the A3, the general picture of Surrey he presents will mislead your readers, and should be corrected.

It is, no doubt, fun to write about pop stars and St George's Hill, but more representative, though less dramatic, are Surrey's garden centres, its old-fashioned (and courteous) driving habits, its public services that work as they should.

Come shopping in Weybridge on Saturday mornings, Mr Popham, or walk along the Thames at Walton Bridge. You will certainly see a citizenry at ease with itself, not impoverished. It is true, but not showy or smug either. When your bathroom tiles talk to you about Russian literature or the

check-out lady at Sainsbury's about her Greek holiday, you realise that the peaceable, democratic capitalism of southern England has much to recommend it.
PAUL WOODS
Weybridge, Surrey

Fossils point to aquatic apes

Sir: Jerome Burne ("Did Lucy walk in the woods?", 7 October) overlooks the one explanation for the evolution of bipedalism that fits most neatly with the new fossil evidence he describes.

The location of these fossils in areas once dominated by lake and river formations is compelling evidence in support of the "aquatic ape" theory (see Elaine Morgan's book of the same name) which postulates a semiaquatic stage of human evolution in which bipedalism develops to maximise the utility of wading both to avoid predators and to exploit the highly nutritious food resources of the aquatic habitat.

Morgan has, virtually single-handedly, been opposing the savannah explanation for over 20 years, pointing out that human evolutionary adaptations such as hairlessness, body fat and neoteny, while of negative value to land-based animals, are common features of aquatic ones. The academic establishment has now every reason to take her work more seriously.
CHRISTOPHER HILL
London N7

Swim in Adriatic once a pleasure

Sir: The Weasel's article on pollution at the Venice Lido (5 October) intrigued me. It brought back many memories, and the realisation of how the Adriatic has changed over the years.

I grew up in Trieste (which he would have reached, had he continued to swim) and swimming in the sea was a real pleasure, night sorties in star-studded waters being the norm for us children.

When I went back in the Sixties the sea had lost its purity, and when it got to the Seventies I quickly abandoned my usual habit of taking off my glasses for the water, after being confronted by a dead rat floating past my face, which I had been unable to see in time. Further inspection revealed other sewerage products and, like the Weasel, I retreated pronto.

They tell me that things are now much improved. The article makes me wonder if it is really so.
MRS A BAKTRAM
Cambridge

Foreign conkers

Sir: Miles Kingston claims (8 October) that nowhere else in the world do people play conkers. They do here in Canada, and have for at least 100 years. They also do in the north-eastern United States, where I was raised.

No doubt the game was introduced here by the British, but that is not what Mr Kingston claimed in his sweeping exclusion of the tiny bit of the world called North America.
PETER CALAMAI

Radio listeners' right to religion

Sir: As one who spent 20 years as a religious broadcasting producer at the BBC, I suppose I should be grateful that yet again Polly Toynbee has raised its profile ("Give us hellfire, not opiate, in the God slot", 14 October).

I wish, however, that she would distinguish between the moral and the religious. It is a reasonable question to the BBC to ask why it does not engage more in moral broadcasting, in which clearly the widest views should be included. But there is no such department.

Religious broadcasting does not require its producers or its contributors necessarily to be believers, but it should require them to be those who think that religion has significance. Music producers must like music, news producers must find news interesting.

Ms Toynbee has every right to think religion rubbish and even dangerous, but for a large number of people it is central to their lives, and they deserve to have it handled with sympathy, though not uncritically, in BBC broadcasting.

It is true that out there in the real world, there are places where religion is ferocious, extreme and savage. And where atheism is too ... as any Russian or Chinese with a memory will tell you.
MICHAEL SHOESMITH
Lydbury North,
Shropshire

Sir: Polly Toynbee, whom I have long admired as a campaigner for social justice, has shot herself in the foot in her extraordinary diatribe against *Thought for the Day*.

Truth, it appears, is to be found in an unceremonious account of the relationship between what religious people believe and what they do – "True believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere kill each other." This sits uneasily with her espousal of Wolpert's view that religion is a defence against the permanency of death.

What saddens and exasperates me is her clumsy and transparent rivalry with speakers on *Thought for the Day*. "They ooze with improper social concern for the Bosnians or the homeless."

For God's sake, Polly, I like it when you ooze (you do, you know) and I don't care how improper the concern is, as long as it's there.
CHARLES HAMPTON
Oxford

Incorruptible me

Sir: I am, of course, incorruptible, as John Walsh says in his interview with the poet and don (or should that be *Cupo*?) John Fuller ("Full of feeling", 12 October). But as Chair of the judges that awarded Fuller this year's Forward Prize for Best Collection, I didn't need to be quite as incorruptible as he makes out.

Though long an admirer of Fuller's work, I was never actually one of his students, never at Magdalen, never at Oxford ... I'm sure that accounts for a lot.
ALAN JENKINS
London E1

Pour chap

Sir: Is Thames Water's environment manager ("Water-fight that threatens to leave wildlife high and dry", 15 October) really called Peter Spiller?
NICHOLAS MEAGHER
Newcastle upon Tyne

essay

The biggest mother of them all

Once a virgin, now a parent for the very first time. John Lyttle is in awe of Madonna's shrewd career move

While we're all waiting for the inevitable *In Labour with Madonna: The Obstetrician's Cut*, and day-old, six-pound Lourdes Maria – really, what's wrong with Janet? Or Beryl? Surely even Sally would be better than plain Silly? – is learning to breast-feed through a conical nursing bra, let us take one day out of life, get into the groove and put our love to the test.

Let us consider how the one natural act of Ms Ciccone's recent career may affect her future as a singer, actress, multimedia role model and consenting adult who enjoys miming masturbation on stage to the perennially inappropriate tune of "Like a Virgin".

What can I say? Motherhood may not be as sassy a career move as losing your virginity or proclaiming yourself a Material Girl/Marilyn's successor or publishing a bound, and occasionally gagged, photo-book of yourself in various suggestive poses (what was she doing with that depressed-looking German shepherd dog?) tellingly and redundantly entitled *Sex*.

But, as *Sex* proved – see your local porn shop's remainder bin – there's only so far a girl can go before wet dreams dry up and what once may have looked like artistic obsession (yeah, right) begins to resemble sheer monomania. Rather

Momomania, the role untried, than defining yourself solely through blunt sexuality.

That was always sure to be a dead end – as Madonna, a dedicated raider of gay culture, should have realised – and, let's tell the truth and shame Beethoven, there does come a post-your-prime-time when you're no longer a hot young thing fearlessly exposing Western civilisation's hypocritical mores. No, you're actually something perilously close to a Dirty Old Woman, who needs to be told, in a caring, sharing way, to start acting her age, not her shoe size (slingbacks with a stiletto heel, size five).

The brave people who lived to tell Madonna were, of course, the public. A few sampled beats ahead of the critics, the canny, many-headed monster realised that the Empress of Reinvention was running out of new clothes – scanties, to be specific – and that, indeed, Madonna might be less the Mistress of the Multiple Image and more a Variation on a Theme (see also Prince, the royal personage we'd most like to see abdicate). Which maybe wouldn't have mattered much if the explicit object of desire hadn't suddenly gone from gung-ho to po-faced: from *Causing a Commotion* to *Express Yourself*. Previously she had made pop culture seem like a game – scanning Pepsi with the 'blasphemous' transmission of her

product-linked *Like a Prayer* video had both the avant garde and hot polloi shrieking at her rouged cheek – but in the hall of mirrors that once reflected her ever-changing moods, the role as self-appointed ambassador of the liberated libido was increasingly hogging the frame.

Out went any old irony, in flew High Art – the product, one direly imagines, of too many evenings spent in New York's SoHo, hanging out with independent film directors watching obscure German silent movies. *Sex* bouted, the sales for the accompanying album, *Erotica*, were, in industry parlance, "below expectations" – never be a sex goddess with a slipped disc (not when you've just signed a \$100m



more middlebrow; this beast would see off sundry rivals, take a pay cut, and humbly audition to be in an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. Do/don't cry for her...

Take a Bow pointed the way ("You deserve a reward for the role that you played") putting her back at No 1 in America. Before long she was telling the next guy "You'll See... it takes more strength to cry, admit defeat", before covering "Love Don't Live Here Anymore" ("You abandoned me"). In between, Daddy and a violent boyfriend took turns smacking her around in the video for "Oh Father". As penance went, it wasn't quite up to Jody Foster standards – she had to be raped on screen before America felt moved to clear her of any taint in William Hinkley's attempted assassination of President Reagan – but it certainly made the next stage easier, Madonna, diva.

Madonna as diva is destiny. Destiny cannot be fought, only quarrelled with. Turns out this what she said when she first met Barbra Streisand – "I want to be you" – was an honest declaration of ambition. Those tortured, torchy songs signal by-bye to bare breasts and movie documentary footage of on-sex performed on a miners' water bottle. The tramp, it turns out, is a lady. Which is why the parts of mother and Evita ("Both projects are my babies," says the smart blonde) are the right roles at a pivotal moment. The first, like it or not, carries (nominally) clear cultural messages: motherhood is not only maturity – a far cry from any lingering odour of childhood, and hello to a child – it allows vulnerability as well as strength. Madonna knows her P's and cues: "I'm not interested in being Wonder Woman in the delivery room. Give me drugs." Just because it's true doesn't mean it isn't also a PR release: a flagship statement from the new, emotional, dumpy-eyed Madonna, still upset over Sean Penn ("You abandoned me") and aghast at unfaltering maternity wear. It's all a fiery cry from bondage corsets and leather whips.

But she says it with a tinkle, not ire, in her voice, having finally learnt from Evita the fine art of the politic. The merger is smooth, even to the trained or jaundiced eye. As Madonna says, "This is the woman I was born to play", one self-invented machine perfectly understanding the other. In this month's *Jaggy and Janky Fide* photo-ops carry a smoother, sleeker, older star, supposedly in *Evita* as Evita – but it's the one that tells the truth, not more, it is a declaration of intent. There's a stately aul, a determined divorce from what was in favour of what is. It could be about Evita's story, or about her impersonator's. Only Madonna isn't impersonating. At the beginning of her career she was perfectly herself in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. In *Evita* the same holds true.

Which could be cause for elevation or dismay. Either way, Mum's the word.

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The quintessential guide to vogueish words



Miles Kingston

Have you noticed the way certain words swim in and out of fashion? The way a word which hasn't been used commonly for hundreds of years will suddenly emerge blinking into the spotlight, have its short season of celebrity and then get kicked out of the stage door into the alley behind and back into the dictionary?

The word eponymous, for example. By itself it isn't a very useful word. The number of times you want to refer to something which is named after somebody are

less than legion. Yes, we all know by now that a boycott is an eponym, as are guillotine and macintosh and volt and... well, lots of others, because they are all named after their originator, but it is very rare that we actually wish to refer to the process of something being or becoming eponymous.

And yet often in the past few years I have heard people using the word, as in "Do you remember the film of *Tom Jones*, with Albert Finney playing the eponymous hero?" Actually, what they really mean is the "title role", as it is stretching the meaning of "eponymous" slightly to extend it to cases when a book or film is named after the hero. But "eponymous" sounds a lot cleverer than "title role" and that is one of the main reasons why words do have a celebrity season before vanishing. They have got vocabulary cred. They sound grander than they really are. They cut a dash.

That is why you quite often hear people these days use the word "solipsism" or its adjective, "solipsistic".

Now, solipsism is quite a serious word, and was always used by philosophers to refer to the theory of knowledge which says that the individual cannot really know anything outside its own range of needs, or, as the Collins Concise Dictionary snappily puts it, "The extreme form of scepticism which denies the possibility of any knowledge other than of one's own existence".

But when you hear people on *Start The Week* or possibly *The Late Review* using the word "solipsistic", they are not referring to the extreme form of scepticism which denies the possibility of etc etc. They are using the word as a smart-sounding synonym for "blinkered" or "extremely selfish". Extreme selfishness has become a recognised way of life over the years, giving rise to such passing phrases as "I'm all right, Jack" and "the me generation", which Jonathon Green dates to the early 1970s in his seminal work *New Words*. But there has always been needed a trendy word to make selfishness seem more interesting than it is, and finally "solipsism"

has been chosen for the role. Well done, solipsism! You wear the crown previously worn by narcissism, egotism and autism.

(Yes, autism. Autism did not always refer to a psychological state of non-communication. Autism means only "selfism", and as late as 1980 you will find "autism" listed in *Roger's Thesaurus* as another word for self-absorption and egocentrism, with no hint of what we now call autism.) We are always trying to find words which sound more important than the meaning justifies. That is why people say "quintessential" instead of "essential". That is why, instead of using the word "important", it sounds more important if you use the word "seminal". As I did when I referred, two paragraphs back, to "Jonathon Green's seminal work *New Words*". Now, I don't know if it really is seminal, meaning influential and the beginning of something new and original. I certainly didn't mean that. I have no idea if Green's book has had any effect on

anyone except me. When I refer to "Jonathon Green's seminal book", I mean his handy little dictionary in which he has listed a lot of neologisms which offend me a long tawny through bigger dictionaries which don't list them... But I don't say that. I say "seminal".

Other words which have recently become trendy and then been discarded? Certainly. There's "feral". And there's "cusp". There's "nodal". And there's "epiphany". And there's "shaman" and there's "mimetic" and there's "fatwa" and there's "jihad" and there's "formulaic" and there's "outreach" and there's "palimpsest"...

Ah! Palimpsest. More of that tomorrow.

Correction and apology. Last week I said that "John Major's main task is now to identify the needs of the Tory Party". This of course should have read "John Major's main task is now to identify and satisfy the needs of the Tory Party". I am sorry if this caused any confusion.

0711 20 1520

Remembering the meaning of disgrace

In the end, this cash-for-questions furore is about authority, the Constitution. Speaker Boothroyd, the nation's matron, was firm and fast in ordering a new inquiry and a debate. Sir Gordon Downey, the parliamentary ombudsman, has been seen slipping in and out of Westminster, tight-jawed and thin-lipped, the very model of a Victorian public servant.

Inside the Palace, committee-men have scurried silently to promise him whatever powers he requires. On the BBC, Tory MPs such as Iain Duncan-Smith, who we generally hear speaking fluent Young-Turkish, have sounded grave and statesperson-like.

Across the land, the message has gone out: the Commons will reassert her ancient dignity in the face of all these unseemly newspaper allegations about lobbyists, brown envelopes, grinning men in bow ties, and arm-twisting whips. The snook-cockers shall be punished. Yea, and the sleaze-balls and tenner-pocketers will be cleansed from the High Court of Parliament.

It is, is it not, a breast-swelling example of the British system in action, doing for us in the Nineties in a minor way what the Spithead Review did a century ago?

I am not being entirely satirical. The lesson of the past couple of years isn't only that politicians do bad things, and are found out; it is that Parliament – eventually – reacts. The Nolan inquiry, and the rule-changes that followed it, were big events in the 20th-century history of the Commons.

Will they go further? The first problem concerns misbehaving backbenchers. The Constitution has assumed for centuries that Members are Honourable Members and cannot be easily punished or reined in. Indeed, an assembly of individuals who could be easily punished, not merely by the party whips, but by the state, would not be a free parliament.

So it has taken a long time for a system of sanctions and penalties to develop; and it is sad that it has been necessary. Parliament has always had and used sanctions, particularly in harrasing misbehaving MPs from the premises.

The problem is a modern one not only because we have had some egregious examples of greed and corner-cutting in the past few years, but because the social norms that controlled public behaviour have dissolved. Once, disgrace was disgrace. Once, a rogue MP would be "cut", disappearing into obscurity or resigning from pure shame. Once, too, it would have been impossible to imagine a merchant bank trader, criticised by the Bank of England and sacked after her bank's collapse, claiming a £500,000 bonus at an industrial tribunal.

No longer. Peregine Worsbourn, the *Sunday Telegraph's* High Tory columnist, put it well last weekend: "Being disgraced is no longer



Andrew Marr

The Commons must fight against scandal – or accept its second-division status in the new Britain

what it was... Social ostracism is a thing of the past. It would be surprising, for example, if Neil Hamilton is required to resign from his clubs or is invited to fewer parties. Quite probably, he will be invited to more, since nowadays a whiff of scandal is more social asset than liability...

This means that the old clubman-Commons, relying essentially on Perry's world of "chaps' rules", is dead. If standards are to be maintained, or rather, perhaps, reintroduced, harsher formal penalties may be required.

They exist. It is well known that MPs can be reuked, suspended and – if bankrupt – removed. But they can also be sacked for misbehaviour. This last happened in October 1947 when one Garry Allighan wrote an article, I believe accusing other MPs of taking cash from newspapers, and was chucked out after a vote called by one Quintin Hogg. It may be time for chucking out to return.

That would be easy enough to achieve in principle. But there is a bigger threat to the Commons' reputation than backbench misconduct. It is that Parliament has, for so long, been so hopelessly compromised by the executive. Ministers change the rules, head the rules, refuse Parliament the truth, and put savage pressure on individuals and sometimes on Commons officials. Government, with its huge reserves of people and information, stoked up with impatience of executive authority, has been Parliament's toughest rival.

The behaviour of individual MPs in the Hamilton affair may have been bad. But worse, to my mind, is the charge that the Government, through David Willetts, now Paymaster General but then a whip, arm-twisted a Commons committee to try to stifle the growing scandal. We should be in no doubt Speaker Boothroyd's decision to allow an emergency debate on this today is an important moment.

Why? Because it touches directly on the pride of the Commons, and its constitutional independence, at a time when all are tumbling into history. Parliament has lost authority to the judiciary and power to the institutions of the EU. It has lost its unique place as a forum for national debate to the broadcasters and press. Above all, though, it has been cheerfully trampled on by successive governments.

At some point, the Commons must choose between fighting back or finally accepting its second-division status in the new Britain. Perhaps we have reached it.

Chucking out the odd bad apple would be a shocking and salutary move. But if MPs are really serious about their purpose, this emergency debate on executive hollering is more important still. Euro-sceptics want Parliament to regain its lustre by fighting Brussels. But the real battle is nearer to home, and about British government. And it can start today.

Private tolerance and public panic

By Polly Toynbee

There is a moral tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. So Tony Blair must hope, as his South African speech this week stakes out his claim to moral and family values. But it is a dangerous tide to ride, balanced on a wave of fear, surging in on a flood of moral panic. Perhaps in the face of this *fin de siècle* hysteria, it is the way to victory. But if so, who is there now to speak words of calm and common sense?

It leaves the electorate in a turmoil of panic: society is out of control, the family done for, children are running wild, schools teach nothing, crime is rampant, respect is dead, the cult of instant gratification is rife. The very word "moral" now belongs so firmly with the alarmists that it is virtually unusable by anyone else. Tony Blair's words were thoughtfully chosen, but the underlying message was loud and clear. He was riding a storm we might have hoped he would try to pacify.

We live in curiously schizoid times: so much public comment is at variance with most people's private experience. In the real world people are more liberal than ever before. They are less censorious, more open-minded about cohabitation, homosexuality, babies born out of wedlock and divorce than at any time in history. Soap operas tell the story very well. Within families and among communities of friends and colleagues, we are tolerant as never before. Freedom brings more diversity, more choice – but the flip side of freedom is more risk, danger and dislocation. It is exceedingly difficult to have one without a measure of the other. Though of course Blair is also right to assert, "Social morality is not in opposition to liberty, but in fact the only way in which the individual can enjoy freedom".

Despite private tolerance, however, the public mood – generated by politicians, the right-wing press and think-tanks – is increasingly illiberal and intolerant. Tony Blair laid down very careful caveats – no, he is not scapegoating single parents, working mothers, gays nor even sex, drugs and rock and roll. Yet alarm bells still ring at his words. His speech was designed so cleverly for the front page of the *Daily Mail* (to whom it was given first), with the triumphant headline "Blair's family values crusade", which chills the cockles of more liberal hearts.



In these schizoid times, personal liberality contrasts with a mood of moral hysteria over the breakdown of 'family values'

But is that what it takes these days to win elections? If so, quick-fingered Blair is a mighty fine prestidigitator – now you see it, now you don't. He puts the family values cards down on the table but before you have time to inspect them he whisks them away again. By magic, all that is left is a perfectly decent speech about decency, peppered with harmless words such as "community", "duty", "responsibility" – who could gansay these values? Yet he leaves behind a moral taste in the mouth, a word upon the breeze. It's a very clever trick – but it won't do. It will not even wash with the right: the *Mail* leader column demands to know exactly what he is going to do to shore up family values, especially in tax and benefits. What indeed? Are his family values, perhaps, going to be cashable in more money to the

poorest mothers and children on benefit?

This is not, I think, cynical populism on the part of Blair. But he is attempting the very nearly impossible. He is trying to harness the moral concerns of the traditional right and weave them in with the moral concerns of the liberal left about the state of the poor and the dispossessed. This is how he hopes to solve Labour's underlying problem – how to make what is now a very large, reasonably contented, well-off majority care about the underclass. Perhaps it is the only hope of gaining general consent – though some of us might prefer the language of generosity, and altruism.

The effect, though, is to demonise the poor and to frighten everyone else with the curious idea that what happens on sink housing estates is

somehow typical of the way we all live now. It was ever thus. The Victorians used to love to scare themselves silly with horror stories of gin mothers, rampant prostitution, gangs of child thieves. Tub-thumpers have always pointed with relish at the moral derelictions of the dregs of society as proof of a general malaise.

But a society that is fed a scary self-image of social calamity is unlikely to do the right things. It is now firmly imprinted in the public mind that we are a disaster zone. The words trip off the tongues in every radio phone-in – single parents, wild children, sin and crime – hit the panic button!

The truth is more complicated. But who is to tell it? When even the party in power paints a catastrophic picture of the society it has presided over for the past 17 years, where is

the voice of moderation and common sense? Of course we have some serious and intractable social problems. What are we to do with the young unemployed, the uneducated, the hopelessly and criminal tribes that prey on the rest of us? How do we break into the cycles of neglectful and abusive parents who are themselves the victims of generations of bad upbringing?

But most children grow up to be law-abiding citizens, better educated than ever before, with more social mobility and choice about how they want to live than they ever had in the golden Fifties. Some things are worse. Crime is worse. The poor are more alienated. More people, especially children, are poor. But if we sink into a sea of hysteria, we will never tackle those problems one by one. How do you generate public support for problem-solving approaches to crime and unemployment if politicians give us only the arid language of fear and despair, not of hope?

Why, incidentally, do politicians assume the word "family" is a political synonym for "good"? Not for nothing is Philip Larkin's most famous poem one of the nation's most popular. More seriously, though, if morality is reduced to "family values", then public attention is diverted from some rather more pressing moral questions.

How will history judge our morals? I continue to hope they will be surprised that apparently decent, prosperous people could live so happily cheek by jowl with those who have nothing. They will wonder why we were so complacent about the sleaze, dishonesty and low expectation of altruism seeping into our politics and public life. They may be angry that we were so deliberately selfish about the fate of the planet. They will wonder why so much emotional energy was squandered on the misdeeds of the poor and so little on the fraud, corruption and greed of the rich.

No, there was nothing to take issue with in Tony Blair's speech and much to agree with. Yes, we want the Decent Society he describes – of course we do. But it is a great deal more difficult to achieve if the voters are whipped up into such a moral turmoil about "social disintegration", "social breakdown", "family breakdown" and "the growing tide of lawlessness", that the only remedy seems to be more punishment and a better burglar alarm.

Rail gets its lines crossed

By Christian Wolmar



It's like BA telling callers that British Midland is cheaper

If you have had difficulty telephoning railway inquiries, you are not alone. About 20 million of the 60 million annual callers do not get through. Many people no longer even try. The service, long a source of frustration for travellers, has deteriorated dramatically because of increased demand and because it is being reorganised as a result of privatisation.

From next week, there will be one unified national number, 0345 484950, to call for train inquiries from anywhere in the country. Over the past year, this number has been gradually extended to most parts except London and Merseyside.

It should, of course, be a simple matter to provide train information efficiently and speedily. British Rail, however, never managed it, especially in the face of increased demand as people became accustomed to using the telephone for everything from booking soccer tickets to ordering groceries. Here was a good opportunity for the government to show a concrete benefit of privatisation. But of course they have blown it again out of parsimony. Complaints about the new number have already flooded my desk.

The system grew up in a haphazard way and was never properly sorted out by BR. Providing train information is expensive and unrewarding because there is no immediate financial transaction. In the (very) old days, it used to be possible to telephone your local station and an under-worked clerk would happily take you through the nooks and crannies of the rail network. Then the service was consolidated at main stations or centralised bureaux.

In London, there were four numbers to dial, depending on your destination. It was confusing for tourists and others who did not know the difference between the East Coast and West Coast mainlines (which in any case are stupid names for lines that both go through central England nowhere near the coasts until they reach the North).

Even when you did get through, the information was often inaccurate, as borne out by surveys by the rail users group, which showed that all but two or three of 45 inquiries were wrongly informed about engineering works.

Then came privatisation, which brought in its wake a fundamental problem. Tra-

the parts of British Rail providing the services, which lately were InterCity, Regional Railways and Network SouthEast. With privatisation, these three were split into 25 train operators and some of these compete with one another.

The Rail Regulator, John Swift, had to devise a system which ensured that all information provided was impartial, and did not favour one operator against another. This is not easy. For example, if you are going from London to Birmingham, most trains go from Euston run by InterCity West Coast, but the cheapest services, run by Chiltern, go from Marylebone but take half an hour longer. So, in theory, the operator is supposed to tell every caller asking about cheap trains about the Marylebone services, which will take ages and lead to even more delays in getting through. It's like expect-

Midland is cheaper and its schedules more convenient. Which? magazine has twice highlighted this issue and found that virtually no one provides "impartial" information. It is not that Mr Swift is wrong, it is that the whole notion of splitting up BR into competing operators is flawed.

Moreover, there is the problem of "local" information. In the past, you phoned the local bureau, but now the 45 bureaux around the country will be linked through the 0345 number. While the new system initially directs calls to the local centre, once there is an overflow, which seems to be most of the time, the call can be routed anywhere in the country.

Operators, many of whom are in the highest centre, at Newcastle, will have no idea of the local services in your area. It is a lot to expect of clerks in Havant (another big centre) to know anything about regional train services in Fife. They will not be helped by the fact that the information for different services is not on a single computer programme but several. And information about delays and engineering problems will have to be sent out by each of the 25 train operators to each of the 45 bureaux.

Moreover, as some of the complainants to me have already pointed out, you can't buy a ticket off the 0345 number. Instead, you then go to the local train operator. It's as if you rang a theatre to buy a ticket but they couldn't tell you the time of the performance. As for details of complicated journeys, forget it. One correspondent tried to get information about getting from Bristol to Boulogne via Folkestone and it took him an hour and a half and innumerable calls.

As ever, the new system is desperately under-resourced which is why so many calls go unanswered. Despite all these problems, it would have been possible to create a good national service. The Dutch do it, simply by making every transport provider – whether buses, trains, ferries or trams – contribute towards the national inquiry service which covers all forms of transport.

But here, the ideology got in the way. A well-funded national service, paid for by providers and possibly with a hit of taxpayers' cash thrown in, is too redolent of socialist ideals to be introduced by a Tory government. I suspect that 0345 484950 will

Semaphore for the tongue tied

Nicholas Soames, bon viveur, toff, and old boy of Eton, proudly sported an old school tie in the Commons yesterday although, in an effort to make the Tories the people's party, the Prime Minister has declared that new Labour means old school tie. But even the Prime Minister cannot erase the importance of the tie in Westminster.

In a world where variety in suits comes in shades of grey, the tie is more than a fashion statement. It is a notice board that tells whether you are "one of us". John Major's shiny grey tie sums up his belief in the "classless" society.

The rest of his Cabinet sat on the front bench for Prime Minister's questions wearing a variety of shades which looked as though they were taken from the dowdier shelves of the Tie Rack. But defying the order to be bland, the Minister of State for Defence went on a shopping expedition for a new Old Etonian tie at his tailor's in St James's to wear when he wound up the two-day defence debate in the Commons.

As an act of defiance to the leadership, it ranked as one of the more colourful protests. The OE tie – black with a narrow light blue stripe – was set off by a starched white collar and blue shirt. Mr Soames supports the Prime Minister on almost every issue, but on the question of the old school tie,

to make a stand. Tam Dalyell, one of the two Old Etonians on the Labour benches – the other is Mark Fisher – also happened to be making his own point to his leader, Tony Blair.

The veteran MP for Linlithgow, who was the late Nicholas Ridley's tag at Eton, was wearing a green tie bearing the motto of a sheaf of corn and crossed pen with hoe – the symbol of old Labour before the red rose was introduced as the party's logo.

One of the most popular ties in the Commons carries the salmon and cucumber stripes of the Garriek. Ken Clarke used to wear it day and night, until he got fed up with the jokes about it.

Yesterday, David Shaw, the Tory MP for Dover, had a more restrained yellow and red striped tie with the Commons portcullis – the Royal Marines club of the House of Commons. As the MOD – and Mr Soames – have closed down the Marine band school at Deal in his constituency, he is wondering whether he will be allowed to go on wearing it.

Lord Mason, the former Labour defence minister, is a tie collector. He used to sport a tie carrying Royal Navy Harrier jump jets. Once, when defence spending was under a squeeze, he was able to complain: "There's more jump jets on my tie than in the Royal Navy."

Good-bye battery



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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR				D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	1987	8-6	7-14	100			06-61
Canada	2242	38-34	37-40	1-2626	3-8	60-58	06-61
Germany	2435	70-71	70	1-5465	30-35	36-38	03-74
France	23236	56-57	55-56	5-587	40-45	27-28	03-74
Japan	3687	45-58	45-49	52-53	345-39	92-93	06-62
Italy	1722	87-88	87-88	7-31	51-53	51-53	06-65
Spain	1200	20-22	19-20	1-4	44-45	23-24	06-65
Belgium	50225	14-10	23-21	2-192	75-85	71-87	20-50
Denmark	4047	156-157	157-161	5-5856	39-39	236-247	18-57
Netherlands	1485	75-76	75	1-5857	37-37	37-16	18-57
Sweden	10864	1-3	1-4	1-5609	50-55	44	18-57
Switzerland	1357	170-170	165-166	65-76	50-55	19-19	44-23
Norway	24458	15-15	15-15	2-254	60-62	40-48	44-23
Denmark	1481	21-22	22-22	1-5857	50-55	44-48	44-23
Switzerland	2500	75-71	75-77	1-587	45-47	30-35	18-57
Australia	2278	120-120	124-124	1-587	45-47	35-35	18-57
South Africa	2324	610-613	610-613	1-587	45-47	35-35	18-57
Hong Kong	36854	4-4	4-4	250-261	70-70	80-85	50-50
New Zealand	22220	74-82	20-223	1-587	45-47	35-35	18-57
South Korea	22220	74-82	20-223	1-587	45-47	35-35	18-57
Singapore	22239	0-0	0-0	14-13	70-75	70-75	18-57

Country	Starting	Dollar	Country	Starting	Dollar
Austria	72484	15376			

Brazil	16,220	12,349	Omaha	6,528	3,285
China	10,028	9,398	Portland	24,522	26,130
Egypt	5,389	3,435	Providence	41,032	73,700
France	72,850	42,822	Portland	26,443	65,750
Germany	208,773	170,413	Rosario	57,588	36,048
Greece	39,224	34,291	Salt Lake	86,513	54,420
India	95,401	61,912	San Jose	7,995	1,000
Japan	4,748	3,330	Salt Lake	42,576	77,500
Nigeria	12,861	8,130	UAE	5,979	3,670

Notes: Forward rates reflect sign to the left or a discount (backward from spot rates). These quoted rates to sign are at a premium (note sign to right). *2007 rates quoted as 2006 rates. *All the latter.

Source: Foreign exchange rates and Gold, 1992-2007. *2007 rates may be slightly higher than the actual.

Tourist Rates

Australia (Dollars)	18360	France (Francs)	79105	New Zealand (Dollars)	21980
Austria (Schillings)	185000	Germany (Marks)	13480	Norway (Kroner)	10080
Belgium (Francs)	483500	Greece (Drachmas)	570500	Portugal (Escudos)	238500
Cataland (Dollars)	20940	Hong Kong (Dollars)	19920	Spain (Pesetas)	653000
Cyprus (Pounds)	0720	India (Rupees)	68225	Sweden (Kronor)	10325
Denmark (Kroner)	96365	Japan (Yen)	236500	Switzerland (Francs)	1900
Holland (Gulden)	26363	Malaysia (Malaysian Dollars)	72300	Taiwan (New Dollars)	148750000
Finland (Markka)	76840		95495	United States (Dollars)	15390

UK	Germany	US	Japan
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Base	57%	Discount	25%	Prime	87%	Discount	0%
France		Lombard	45%	Discount		Belgium	42%
Investment	35%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.2%	Discount	25%
Italy		Prime	5.5%	Spain		Central	30%
Discount	82%	Discount	50%	10 Day Repo	6.7%	Bankwired	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	10%
Advances	23%	Discount	3.2%	Repo (Net)	4%	Lombard	42%

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
US	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50	Canada	6.50	6.50	7.00	7.00
UK	8.00	8.00	8.50	8.50	France	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50
Germany	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50	Italy	8.00	8.00	8.50	8.50
Japan	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.50	Spain	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50
Australia	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	Sweden	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50
Netherlands	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	Belgium	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50
Switzerland	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.50	Portugal	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50
South Africa	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50	Greece	8.00	8.00	8.50	8.50
India	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	South Korea	7.00	7.00	7.50	7.50
China	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Argentina	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Brazil	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Chile	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Colombia	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Peru	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Venezuela	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Uruguay	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Ecuador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Paraguay	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Bolivia	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Costa Rica	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Panama	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Nicaragua	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
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Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
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Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	El Salvador	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50	Guatemala	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.50
Honduras	10.00	10.00	10.50	10.					

US	71%	681	69%	655	Telephones	0%	480	0%	591
UK	81%	629	63%	655	Japan	10%	689	97%	772
Japan	55%	165	3%	151	Rus.	9%	773	91%	834
Australia	61%	782	0%	751	Berger	1%	478	7%	610
Germany	538%	494	625%	602	Swedn	0%	631	0%	712
France	51%	502	725%	539	Euro DAT	0%	507	1%	624

Source:HSCB Market Research % sold calculated on local base ** Denotes new territory

	O'Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
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[illegible]

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for the day	Est.Cnts traded	Open Interest
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[illegible]

Liffe FTSE Index Option				
Settlement price: 4047.00	closing offer price			Call/Put
Expiry	2025	2030	2035	Total/Strike
10/10/2025	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00
10/10/2030	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00
10/10/2035	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00	4047.00

Oct	105/1	55/3	15/14	1/57	..
Nov	131/17	92/28	58/46	32/72	..
Dec	166/35	127/48	94/88	66/93	..
Jan	190/52	148/68	113/86	87/110	..

Commodities

STOCKS	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LINE STOCKS	chg
Aluminum HQT-64	1555-7	06471	06577	-	15
Aluminum HQT-64	1590-203	1223-6	1405	78940	- 440
Copper & H	0885-225	1828-2	72556	09550	- 0820
Lead	25-4	8897	10320	10320	-
Nickel	8890-7000	7000-0	6222	8304	- 234
Ti	5505-45	5895-8300	4222	54825	- 73
Zinc	994-6	1020-1	20670	-	-
Summit Securities	15	1500	10-7	Stock volume & change in	
	1500	10-7	10-7	change at 10:05 A.M. 10/25	

PRECIOUS METALS		COMES TO AT 1470000	
per oz./oz			
Platinum	38450	22250	373304 120343

Potatoes	1625	7345	Brahmas or	10	67	5548	6678	24	
Deep spot	5252	6735	Brahmas or	20	64	5448	3678	28	
Dark Skin	3910	2615	Brahmas or	SC	33	4418	3815	38	2253
									Heavy Extra 4 Bn

AGRICULTURAL									
Cocoa		Coffee		Ruxley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LCE	C/ton	LCE	C/ton	LCE	C/ton	LCE	C/ton	ASA	Gst/60kg
Nov	885	Nov	1528	Nov	3125	Nov	3C50		
Mar	902	Mar	1459	Mar	3875	Mar	7400	Feb	73

May 1985	May 1982	May 1980	Apr 1980	Apr 1980
Vol: 5,398	Vol: 3,485	Vol: 21	Vol: 28	Vol: 106
White Sugar	Freight	Wheat	Corn	1220 Pears
LCE Storm	LCE 800x1000	LCE 1/2x1000	CBOT #	Caristiushel

Dec	318.00	Oct	194.00	Nov	157.85	H-Ls	56.00
Nov	318.00	Nov	194.00	Jan	89.85	288.50-294.75	265.50
May	312.00	Oct	196	Mar	101.00	290.00-297.00	232.75
May	329.50	Indian	197.8	Oct	92.7	304.50-317.00	298.25

Source: CBOT

Other Sells (Agriculture)

Nov	Meats (No. 3)	51.00	335.50	Nov-Jan	Soy Oil	FL/1000	90.50
Oct-Nov	Copra (1)	51.00	350.00	Sep-Oct	Coconut Oil (1)	51.00	74.00
Dec	Coconut (NY)	1.60-2.00	74.25		Sunflower Oil	51.00	555.00

[illegible]

WTI CRUDE		WTI		WTI		WTI		WTI	
WTI CRUDE		WTI		WTI		WTI		WTI	
WTI	5.30pm	%chg	WTI	close	%chg	WTI	close	%chg	WTI
Nov	26.72	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Dec	26.32	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jan	23.55	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Feb	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Mar	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Apr	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
May	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jun	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jul	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Aug	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Sep	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Oct	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Nov	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Dec	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jan	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Feb	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Mar	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Apr	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
May	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jun	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jul	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Aug	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Sep	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Oct	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Nov	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Dec	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jan	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Feb	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Mar	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Apr	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
May	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Jun	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
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Aug	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Sep	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Oct	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Nov	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.20
Dec	22.25	+0.02	WTI	23.58	+0.02	WTI	26.55	WTI	23.2

"92C1 Indices	Base data	+Spot	+Day Chg	Dec 91W	% Trk chg	Year ago	% Tr chg
Index	1970=100	210.56	+100	203.50	+7.86	181.01	+16.33
Agricultural	1970=100	245.38	+146	234.75	+38.37	207.71	+8.34
Energy	1970=100	82.11	+183	71.21	+11.80	58.36	+40.70

Industrial Metals	970-100	5332	-100	6932	-3970	6355	-2564
Livestock	970-100	5855	173	6271	-450	6115	-350
Precious Metals	970-100	6234	+100	6988	-722	6932	-4932

Source: Goldman Sachs & Co. *CDO is a trademark and service mark of Goldman Sachs & Co. *Close as of 14 Oct '98

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Stock	Ins	Mut	Other	Stock	Ins	Mut	Other
1	1	1	1	51	51	51	51
2	2	2	2	52	52	52	52
3	3	3	3	53	53	53	53
4	4	4	4	54	54	54	54
5	5	5	5	55	55	55	55
6	6	6	6	56	56	56	56
7	7	7	7	57	57	57	57
8	8	8	8	58	58	58	58
9	9	9	9	59	59	59	59
10	10	10	10	60	60	60	60
11	11	11	11	61	61	61	61
12	12	12	12	62	62	62	62
13	13	13	13	63	63	63	63
14	14	14	14	64	64	64	64
15	15	15	15	65	65	65	65
16	16	16	16	66	66	66	66
17	17	17	17	67	67	67	67
18	18	18	18	68	68	68	68
19	19	19	19	69	69	69	69
20	20	20	20	70	70	70	70
21	21	21	21	71	71	71	71
22	22	22	22	72	72	72	72
23	23	23	23	73	73	73	73
24	24	24	24	74	74	74	74
25	25	25	25	75	75	75	75
26	26	26	26	76	76	76	76
27	27	27	27	77	77	77	77
28	28	28	28	78	78	78	78
29	29	29	29	79	79	79	79
30	30	30	30	80	80	80	80
31	31	31	31	81	81	81	81
32	32	32	32	82	82	82	82
33	33	33	33	83	83	83	83
34	34	34	34	84	84	84	84
35	35	35	35	85	85	85	85
36	36	36	36	86	86	86	86
37	37	37	37	87	87	87	87
38	38	38	38	88	88	88	88
39	39	39	39	89	89	89	89
40	40	40	40	90	90	90	90
41	41	41	41	91	91	91	91
42	42	42	42	92	92	92	92
43	43	43	43	93	93	93	93
44	44	44	44	94	94	94	94
45	45	45	45	95	95	95	95
46	46	46	46	96	96	96	96
47	47	47	47	97	97	97	97
48	48	48	48	98	98	98	98
49	49	49	49	99	99	99	99
50	50	50	50	100	100	100	100

Alcey Equity Ser A	5,117	288.2	Legal & General Managed Accs	384.1	100.7
Alcey International Ser A	2,246	215.5	London of Manchester Flexible Acc		67.9
Alcey Managed Ser A	7,981	835.4	London Equity		175.40
Alcey National Managed	1,425	158.0	London Mixed		66.60
Alcey National Ltd Equity	842	158.2	M & G Managed Bond Acc	10,020	67.12
	2,000	70.00	M & G Bond Fund Acc	300.2	0.7

[illegible]

UNIT TRUST GUIDE
 ex dividend
 exit charge applies
 when units are sold
 formerly 'offer'
 formerly 'bid'
 Non SIB recognised funds

Property wizard seeks backers for a Russian flutter



Betting on Russia: Chelseafield chairman Elliott Bernerd

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Bermuda-registered, AIM-listed, backed by property industry luminary Elliott Bernerd and planning to set up an online lottery in 10 Russian cities, the stock market's latest flotation candidate yesterday secured its place at the top of a list of ambitious and unusual issues. Alea, named after the Latin word for a game of chance, is hoping for first dealings on the Alternative Investment Market at the beginning of next month.

Alea will be the route for UK investors into the Russian national lottery, a joint venture between Alea (60 per cent) and its Russian partner, the Russian Committee for the Protection of Peace (40 per cent). Raising £32.4m in new money, the company has plans for lotteries around the emerging world, including the former Soviet Union, South America and Africa.

The company is the latest venture from Elliott Bernerd, chairman of Chelseafield, Britain's ninth largest quoted property company, but a serious investor on his own account in Russia, which is seen by many as the dangerous but potentially lucrative Wild West of the capitalist world. Other well-known entrepreneurs taking a bet on the region include George Walker, who is currently introducing Russians to the attractions of horse racing.

Through a private company, Halstead Services, Mr Bernerd has invested in recent years in a string of forestry, oil, money market trading and gold businesses in the former Soviet Union and last year he appointed the former Lorrain main board director and Union International chief executive Terry Robinson to run his embryonic Russian empire.

According to Mr Robinson, there is enormous untapped demand for a Camelot-style lottery in Russia. Recent research showed that 64 per cent of Russians are aware of lotteries, many more than for any other wagering activity. Some 53 per cent like a flutter, a little under half have already gambled on Russia's off-line lotteries, such as scratchcards, and 70 per cent say the chance of winning the equivalent of \$1m would tempt them to have a go.

Mr Robinson and his former finance director at Union, Paul Taylor, bring with them their experience of dealing in emerging markets such as Africa and Russia. For that, Halstead will retain a 30 per cent stake in Alea following the proposed share placing. Esnet, which operates lotteries in Australia, the Netherlands, Germany and Latvia, provides the operational know-how and takes a 20 per cent stake in the company.

New investors, who will subscribe to a package of loan notes and equity, will hold 50 per cent of the shares in return for providing all the £32.4m that will fund the new venture. There are 300,000 units on offer at £108, each of which comprises one \$100 loan note and 133 shares worth an initial 23p.

The complex funding structure is designed to maximise the return to equity shareholders, with the loan note element of the package paid off as quickly as possible (the target is 18 months).

At the placing price, Alea will be valued at £26.3m and the loan notes and shares will trade separately on AIM.

Investment column, page 23

United wins battle for Blenheim with £592m agreed bid

PATRICK TOOHER

The five month "phoney war" for control of Blenheim appeared to be over yesterday after United News & Media, the money brokering-to-newspapers group run by Labour peer Lord Hollick, made an agreed £592.3m bid for the exhibition organiser.

The deal, coming soon after the £30m merger earlier this year between Lord Hollick's MAI group and Lord Stevens' United Newspapers, will form the world's largest trade fair group with pro forma sales last year of £45m and operating profits of £8.5m.

"This merger creates a world leader in a fast-growing business-to-business sector," said Lord Hollick. "The fit between

Miller Freeman [United's existing exhibitions arm] and Blenheim is remarkably good. The combination will create an exciting range of opportunities for future growth."

United said its 500p share offer had irrevocable acceptance from investors speaking for 56.5 per cent of Blenheim. These included Blenheim's chairman, Neville Buch, whose near 6 per cent stake is worth £26.7m; French utility Generale des Eaux with 15 per cent; and the American Iannuzzi family with 12 per cent.

The deal increases United's borrowings to £625m, but the interest bill is comfortably covered over seven times by earnings.

In the City, analysts said United appeared to have won

the fight for Blenheim at a very good price while United's assurances that the takeover will be earnings enhancing in its first year sent its shares sharply higher. They closed 40p better at 693.5p while Blenheim was 23p firmer at 496.5p.

The agreed offer should put to an end months of speculation about the future of Blenheim since its announcement in June that it was in talks that might lead to a bid.

Neither United nor Reed-Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publisher also involved in protracted bid talks with Blenheim, ever publicly acknowledged their interest.

Reed is thought to have balked at paying over 480p a share for Blenheim after Mr Buch held out for at least 20p a share more. Mr Buch yesterday indicated that other parties had also expressed an interest in Blenheim but he declined to say who they were.

Lord Hollick said Blenheim was considered to be a takeover candidate "shortly after" the £30m merger of MAI and United Newspapers earlier this year. United later built up a 2 per cent stake in Blenheim just before initial talks between the two sides began in early June until a bid, believed to be 450p a share, was rejected by Blenheim.

Lord Hollick defended his handling of the bid process. "We steadily maintained a position of no comment throughout. We are a cautious and slow oak. We wanted to see Blenheim's intentions [published on 2 October]."

He added that United was keen to avoid a contested bid. He also denied the timing of the deal had anything to do with VNU's dawn raid on Blenheim last week when the Dutch publishing group picked up a 14.99 per cent stake at 500p. VNU said yesterday it had no intention of launching a counter-bid.



Model performance: David Memory (left), The Rack's finance director and the chairman Roy Bishio. Investment, page 22 Photograph: Andrew Burman

Early price review should cut water bills

MICHAEL HARRISON

Water bills are set to begin falling from the end of the century after the industry regulator, Ian Byatt of Ofwat, confirmed that he is to review price controls earlier than planned.

The announcement yesterday sent the share prices of the water companies into reverse although some industry representatives welcomed the move as a means of obtaining regulatory clarity.

The current price controls, which limit increases to the retail price index plus 1 per cent were introduced in 1995 and

were due to run for 10 years. But Mr Byatt announced yesterday that he had decided to review the price limits for all 29 water and sewerage companies in 1999.

"The water companies are now reporting substantial efficiency savings. We will take full account of these at the next review in order that they can be passed on to customers," he said. "Customers have seen prices rising for too long."

The average water bill has risen from £118 in 1989, the year of privatisation, to £218 now, an increase of 85 per cent.

The huge increase has been justified on the grounds of the £30m expenditure programme the industry is undertaking to improve water standards and clean up rivers and beaches.

The rate of increase has, however, been getting progressively slower. In the first five years after privatisation water charges rose by 68 per cent and sewerage charges by 65 per cent.

Since 1994 they have risen by 8.3 per cent and 13.1 per cent respectively, said Ofwat.

Fees had only been due to rise by an average of 0.4 per cent between 2000 and 2005 under the existing price review and in some areas such as Yorkshire, Severn Trent and North West,

they would have been frozen. It is now almost certain that prices will start to come down in real terms. "We would not be reviewing the controls early if we expected to keep them as they are at present," said an Ofwat spokeswoman.

The water companies' licences allow for a review to take place half way through the current price control and it has been widely assumed in the industry that Mr Byatt would take advantage of this.

Pamela Taylor, chief executive of the Water Companies Association, said the announcement represented an important opportunity for the industry, adding that it had not come as any surprise. "This review will enable all parties - companies, the Government, the Environment Agency and Ofwat itself - to create a much needed stable framework within which companies can best serve our customers' needs."

The extent to which the water companies are achieving savings beyond those assumed by the regulator when he set price controls will become apparent later this month when Mr Byatt publishes his annual report of capital expenditure by the industry.

However, BZW will continue to use its vote on all the shares it owns and would meet management where contentious corporate governance issues were involved. What the company did not want was the "public relations offensive of managements being trundled round by brokers."

As part of the change of style in London 11 active fund managers, two of them directors of the operation, are to quit.

Mr Tomlinson is to be replaced by Patricia Dunn, who will have the same role in San Francisco. The chairman of Barclays Global Investors will be Fred Gruen, also from the San Francisco end.

BGI is part of Barclays Asset Management, chaired by John Varley, who reports direct to Martin Taylor, Barclays chief executive, rather than to the group's investment bank, BZW.

Barclays is to continue offering active fund management as well as the indexed business, where the San Francisco company is the world's largest.

However, with the new techniques the difference between active and indexed fund management had become paper thin, Mr Tomlinson said.

The new advanced techniques of active fund management used data on market sentiment - such as analysts' forecasts and trading patterns of other investors - as well as traditional balance sheet and cash flow valuation techniques.

Comment, page 21.

Shares break another record as sterling rises

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Shares in London ended at another record high yesterday, while the pound surged more than two pence to reach its highest level against the German mark since the end of 1994.

The FTSE 100 index ended more than 12 points higher at 4,050.8. It was propelled by an early surge in shares on Wall Street, later reversed by profit-taking. The Dow Jones index was almost 5 points up at 6,014.85 by mid-morning.

Although economic figures due out on both sides of the Atlantic this week and next meant trading was light and cautious, many analysts were very optimistic about the combination of solid growth and low inflation

in the US and UK. "Everything looks like economic Nirvana," said Joseph LaVorgna, an economist at the Wall Street investment bank Lehman Brothers.

Figures out today are expected to show a further decline in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit and a small improvement in government borrowing last month in the UK. US figures for inflation today and industrial output tomorrow are also likely to encourage the view that things could not be better on the economic front.

Both currencies strengthened, with the pound rising to close at DM2.4378. Its index against a range of currencies to up 0.6 at 88.6. The dollar was slightly higher against the yen and up more than a penny against the mark at DM1.5292 by midday.

"There is a lot of speculative interest in the pound stemming from the view that it has lagged behind the other peripheral currencies in Europe," said Paul Megyesi, an analyst at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Adrian Schmidt at Chase

Manhattan agreed: "It is one of the few currencies in Europe with any scope to move," he said. He predicted sterling will climb to DM2.50, although warned that it will struggle to stay there when the economic recovery on the Continent gets under way.

The financial markets still expect the next move in interest rates to be upwards, whereas they see rates on the Continent remaining unchanged against the background of tough fiscal policies, high unemployment and weak growth.

The surge in the oil price to a post-Gulf War high has also helped sterling, still just about considered a petro-currency. The price of the benchmark Brent crude future touched \$25 a barrel yesterday after new reports that Iraqi tanks were on the move.

Chrysler also announced on Monday a doubling of its third quarter profits. Ford results are due today.

Kodak, the world's largest maker of film and photographic paper, unveiled a 21 per cent jump in its third-quarter earnings. Net income rose to \$410m, or \$1.22 a share, from \$338m, or 99 cents a share, in the 1995 quarter.

Company earnings. In a partial reversal of Monday's markets gains, however, the Dow slipped back somewhat in early trading yesterday after profit taking.

Third-quarter profits at General Motors, the largest of the Big Three car makers, came out at \$1.27bn (£802m), or \$1.57 a share, double the level achieved over the same quarter last year.

expected earnings came on the heels of Wall Street's record-setting day on Monday, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average settled over the 6,000 mark for the first time in its 100-year history. They will do little to bolster warnings from the minority of bearish analysts that the New York markets are overvalued compared with

Source: FT Information

Source: FT Information

Barclays merges fund managers

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

Barclays said yesterday it is to integrate its £230bn worldwide fund management business in one new organisation run from San Francisco, making it one of the largest firms of its kind in the world.

As part of the strategy, Barclays' London fund management business is to phase out contacts with executives of the companies it invests in, and rely instead on new techniques of computerised analysis to make investment decisions on the £60bn it has under management from the City.

This policy of relying on computer crunching will bring it into line with the San Francisco co-operation, based on Wells Fargo Nikko Investments, the indexed fund manager Barclays acquired last December for £282m.

Lindsay Tomlinson, who is to be joint chief executive of Barclays Global Investors, the new group, said BZW was scaling back meetings with management because investment decisions based on hard data were more reliable.

Mr Tomlinson said it was much harder to spot the duflers among directors than 10 years ago because company managements were "either very professional or very plausible."

He added: "We don't want managers of companies coming round and just smoothing us. It's a waste of time for everybody." He said FDFM already took the same view.

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STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD (%)	FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei
FTSE 100	4050.80	+12.10	+0.3	4050.80	3632.30	3.86			
FTSE 250	4449.90	+5.40	+0.1	4598.90	4015.30	3.44			
FTSE 350	2013.90	+5.20	+0.3	2013.90	1616.60	3.77			
FTSE SmallCap	2188.35	+5.97	+0.3	2244.36	1954.06	3.11			
FTSE All-Share	1988.18	+5.20	+0.3	1988.18	1791.95	3.72			
New York	5991.68	+28.32	+0.5	6010.00	5332.94	2.15			
Tokyo	21429.93	+400.68	+1.9	22685.90	19734.70	0.781			
Hong Kong	12490.70	+160.35	+1.3	12490.70	10204.97	3.311			
Frankfurt	2726.45	+34.57	+1.3	2726.45	2263.26	1.731			

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bank Bills	Bank Bills	Bank Bills	Bank Bills	Bank Bills	Bank Bills
1 Month	1 Year	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
UK 5.75	6.25	7.41	8.15	7.54	8.25				
US 5.28	5.72	8.55	5.94	8.84	8.29				
Japan 0.34	0.53	2.78	2.71	-	-				
Germany 3.68	3.16	5.99	6.57	6.82					

CURRENCIES									
* 100 Yen base unit									
7 Nov 84 1984									
Money Market Rates				Bond Yields %					
	1 Month	1 Year		Medium Bond	10 Year	Long Bond	GO 10 Year		
UK	5.75	6.25	7.41	8.15	7.54	8.25			
US	5.28	5.72	8.55	5.94	6.84	6.29			
Japan	0.38	0.53	2.79	2.71	-	-			
Germany	3.05	3.16	5.29	6.57	6.82				
Bloomberg's Index									
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Prices	Chg	Chg	Chg	Falls	Prices	Chg	Chg	Chg	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
Oil	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Chg
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MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD (%)	FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei
FTSE 100	4050.80	+12.10	+0.3	4050.80	3632.30	3.86			
FTSE 250	4449.90	+5.40	+0.1	4598.90	4015.30	3.44			
FTSE 350	2013.90	+5.20	+0.3	2013.90	1616.60	3.77			
FTSE SmallCap	2188.35	+5.97	+0.3	2244.36	1954.06	3.11			
FTSE All-Share	1988.18	+5.20	+0.3	1988.18	1791.95	3.72			
New York	5991.68	+28.32	+0.5	6010.00	5332.94	2.15			
Tokyo	21429.93	+400.68	+1.9	22685.90	19734.70	0.781			
Hong Kong	12490.70	+160.35	+1.3	12490.70	10204.97	3.311			
Frankfurt	2726.45	+34.57	+1.3	2726.45	2263.26	1.731			

Source: FT Information

Source: FT Information

CURRENCIES											
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<small>You have been subscribed to the £/\$ and £/DM indicator at 100</small>											

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Source: FT Information

Source: FT Information

Inchcape sells insurance arm to Aon for £160m

MICHAEL HARRISON

Inchcape, the international motor and distribution group, yesterday completed its restructuring programme by selling its Bain Hogg insurance broking business to Aon Corporation of the US for £160m.

The deal surprised the City, which had been expecting Bain Hogg to be demerged, but the reaction was nevertheless positive. The price being paid by Aon, which made an unsuccessful approach for Bain Hogg a year ago, is about £30m higher than the value analysts were placing on a demerged Bain Hogg.

In addition, Inchcape will avoid having to spend the £20m restructuring provision for Bain Hogg announced alongside its interim results last month. It also avoids having to make a net cash contribution of £13m to recapitalise the business.

Inchcape will incur a pre-tax exceptional loss on the sale of £195m, mainly through the writing back of goodwill. But this loss will be largely offset by the £180m exceptional profit the group will make from last week's £380m sale of its testing services division to a group led by Charterhouse Development Capital.

Philip Cushing, Inchcape's chief executive, said: "The value gleaned for shareholders from this deal is considerably greater than had we gone down the demerger route."

The deal was brokered by the US investment bank Morgan Stanley, which has acted in the past for both Inchcape and Aon, the world's second biggest insurance brokerage.

Patrick Ryan, chairman and chief executive of Aon, flew into London a fortnight ago and began working on the deal from a suite in the Savoy Hotel.



Philip Cushing: Deal with Aon was signed 4am yesterday

There is about £6m of cash in the business, which Aon will inherit.

The proceeds of the sale will be used to cut Inchcape's borrowings. The Bain Hogg and Testing Services sales will reduce gearing from 74 per cent to 5 per cent.

Patrick Ryan, chairman and chief executive of Aon, said the acquisition of Bain Hogg would provide it with the platform to develop in Europe, the Far East, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

The disposal programme leaves Inchcape with its main motor vehicles distribution business, principally for Toyota cars, the shipping services business, and soft drinks, office equipment and consumer and industrial products distribution arm.

Meas Peterson is forecasting full-year profits of £9m this year and £12m next. This gives a rating of 21 this year falling to 17 next.

This is expensive but with the sector...

JD Sports on track for growth

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

John David Sports could not have timed its stock market flotation any better. Sports retailing is the boom sector of the high street at the moment with replica football shirts and branded trainers selling like there's no tomorrow.

The big branded sportswear companies such as Nike and Reebok are supporting the boom with huge advertising spends. Their ever-expanding ranges of goods are helping companies like JD Sports grab share not just from sports shops but other clothing retailers.

The sector's growth has put a rocket under the share prices of retailers such as JJB Sports and Blacks Leisure. JJB shares have risen five fold since the company came to the market in November 1994. Blacks Leisure has done even better, rising by a factor of 10 in the same period.

All this has helped JD Sports' cause and the company's advisers have reflected this in the pricing. Priced at a 285p per share - the top end of expectations - the company is valued at £132.6m with a historic rating of almost 28 and a prospective p/e of 21. This is healthy stuff.

But demand from institutions has been strong with talk of the issue being five or six times subscribed. The usual problem is that this is only a placebo to the public cannot get their hands on the shares until they start trading on 22 October.

There is talk of them rising to at least a 25 premium so private investors will find it even more expensive to get a slice of the action.

That is not to say it might not be worth it. JD Sports is a well-regarded company with a good track record. Founded with a single store in Bury in 1981 it now has 61 outlets. The float is raising £39m of new money which will help fund an expansion programme of 25 stores a year rising to total of around 200.

JD has three formats with the core JD Sports chain accounting for 54 of the total. The others are Athleisure, a more leisure oriented format, and JD, a smaller format of the main chain. A larger out-of-town concept is also under consideration.

The margins are healthy. The company has been growing rapidly over the last few years and last year made pre-tax profits of £5.7m on sales of £56m. Footwear accounts for 52 per cent of sales, replica football shirts 2 per cent.

Meas Peterson is forecasting full-year profits of £9m this year and £12m next. This gives a rating of 21 this year falling to 17 next.

This is expensive but with the sector...

growing so fast the shares are certainly worth a look. The caveat is that this is a fashion-led business where trends wax and wane. Ride with it while it lasts but the real trick is knowing when to jump off.

Russian lottery a risky business

If Elliott Bernerd, the property developer, were not behind the proposed flotation of Alea, announced yesterday, it is hard to imagine many investors taking a second glance. A riskier proposition it would be hard to imagine than this one - facing up to the Mafia on their home patch. Alea plans to launch an on-line lottery in 10 Russian cities via a Bermuda-registered, AIM-quoted vehicle.

If that sounds like a recipe for disaster, the fact that new investors are to stump up the total cost of the £39m project, while Mr Bernerd's family retains a 30 per cent stake and operator Esnet keeps 20 per cent, does little to soothe nerves. If you are going to take risks, it usually makes sense to do it with

other people's money and all Mr Bernerd stands to lose is his reputation. But therein lies the cushion. It is hard to imagine anyone less willing to risk his name on a speculative overseas venture when he has built up such a reputation in the UK property market through his quoted vehicle Chelsfield, owner of Wentworth golf course, the Merry Hill shopping centre in Dudley (bought at a knock-down price) and a stake in the proposed redevelopment of a derelict site in White City.

The prospects for a Russian lottery are certainly enticing. There are 150 million people in a country with a penchant for a flutter where the quoted average salary of £2,000 a year vastly underestimates the true figure thanks to a thriving black economy. Almost half the Russians polled in a recent survey are already playing off-line lotteries (scratchcards and the like).

The management, in the form of former Loro and Vestey man Terry Robinson, knows the patch and has linked up with a strong Russian partner and one of the world's leading lottery operators to run the show. The funding structure, raising most of the cash in the form of debt, should leave plenty for equity holders once the bor-

rowings are paid off. The placing price of 33p a share compares with a projected earnings per share figure for 1997 of 34.7p.

This will either make a fortune for its investors or lose their shirts for them. Alea is a Latin word for "a game of chance" - only the individual shareholder can know whether he is prepared to play that game. He should do so with his eyes open.

Tie Rack rolls out new format

Some of Tie Rack's ties may be a bit vivid but there is nothing flash about the management. Led by the irrepressible Roy Bishko and chief executive Nigel McGinty, Tie Rack is a cautiously run business with £12m in the bank and no need to resort to external finance. It is also one of the few retailers to have made a decent fist of international expansion. With its problems in the US behind it, Tie Rack now has almost 400 stores in 26 countries and its early protestations that it was no Sack Shop have been borne out by subsequent events.

Its business is so heavily weighted to the second half and Christmas that its earnings only say a limited amount about the company's performance. Even so, it was a creditable performance with pre-tax profits up 23 per cent to £604,000 in the six months to August. Like-for-like sales were up anywhere between 1 and 5 per cent (the company declined to be more specific) with current trading similar.

Eight more Tie Racks have opened in the second half so far with a total of 15 new outlets planned for the rest of the period. Europe and the Far East are the main targets.

After a lengthy trial the company is now expanding its Rolling Luggage Company, which sells suitcases with extendable handles and wheels. Five have opened so far with two more by the year-end. Management says the concept is profitable though it has not released details. No other new formats are planned.

Tie Rack designs over 90 per cent of its ties in-house and did well over the summer with its Euro 96 range. A new range of Star Trek ties are also selling well.

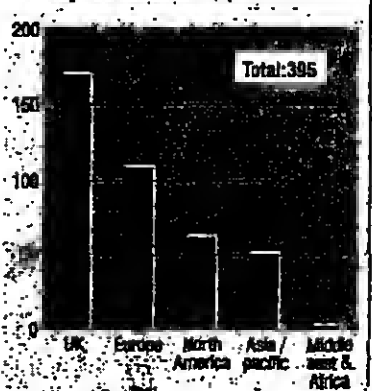
NatWest is forecasting full-year profits of £8.7m. With the shares 3.5p higher at 180p yesterday, they trade on a prospective price-earnings ratio of 17, a slight discount to the sector. The shares have enjoyed a good run but are worth holding.

TIE RACK: AT A GLANCE

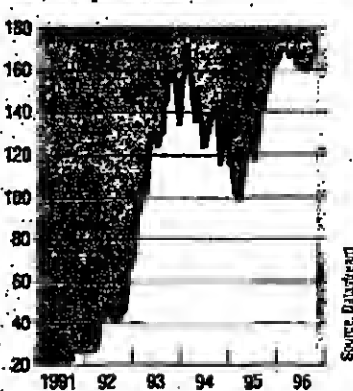
Market value £39m, share price 180p

Five Year record	1994	1995	1996	1995/6	1996/7
Pre-tax profits (£m)	0.7	7.4	7.9	6.5	0.6
Dividends per share (pence)	1.75	2.25	2.75	0.5	0.6

Shop numbers



Share price pence



Dresdner choses London as centre for Eurobond dealings

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

In a new coup for London in the battle for financial supremacy with Frankfurt, Dresdner Bank said yesterday it is to centralise all its Eurobond dealings at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson in the City.

This follows the announcement of plans to acquire Luthy Baillie Dowsett Pethick, a London-based research advice and broking boutique which employs 18 people.

The firm, led by Peter Luthy and Jan Pethick, will be integrated with the Kleinwort fixed income business and will take world-wide responsibility for trading and issuing Eurobonds in the Dresdner group.

Gerhard Abel and Klaus

Rochricht, the current heads of Dresdner's Eurobond trading, will report to London from Frankfurt.

There have been rumours in Frankfurt that Dresdner also plans to shift its foreign exchange business to London, but this has not been confirmed. Mr Luthy will join the management committee of Kleinwort's global markets division. Responsibility for domestic issues and government bonds will remain in Frankfurt.

Leonhard Fischer, joint head of Dresdner's Global Markets Division, said: "There will be no physical movement of business from Frankfurt."

The takeovers of Kleinwort by Dresdner and Morgan Grenfell by Deutsche Bank have upset Frankfurt's financial es-

tablishment. Both have made clear that London is their main investment banking centre.

Other moves by German banks include the acquisition by Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale earlier this year of Panmure Gordon, the British stockbroker.

Mr Fischer, who shares responsibility for Dresdner's global bond business, said the new acquisition was a perfect complement for Kleinwort Benson's international strategy.

Dresdner planned in particular to expand its business with corporate clients and banks and was most interested in LBOP's existing contacts and its credit spread business.

Initially, Dresdner will focus on German mark eurobonds and sterling, moving on to

French franc products and non-European currencies afterwards.

"This is a perfectly logical fill-in for Dresdner's investment banking business," said John Leonard, an analyst at Salomon Brothers, London was a logical choice as a focus for Eurobonds, because it had a more vibrant market.

Mr Luthy previously worked with Hans-Georg Hoffmann, a Dresdner board member, at Lehman Brothers, and some dealers said the move may have been tied to their working relationship.

"Kleinwort is a very conservative player in the market so Luthy Baillie will take them into areas they have not got the expertise to cover," a Eurobond analyst said.

Regent plans early Hambros onslaught

Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong investment group, is to meet Hambros shareholders next week to lobby for its plans to break up the London investment bank, writes Peter Rodgers.

Jim Mellon, managing director of Regent, yesterday confirmed the start of the onslaught on Hambros, which was outlined last month.

He said: "We're going through all the numbers and working out more formally the proposals we roughly outlined before about distributing what we perceive as non-core assets. We'll then go round and see some of the principal shareholders and discuss with them what their views are."

He declined to say which shareholders the company had contacted, but the largest holders are Norwich Union, Guardian Royal Exchange and Banco Sao Paulo.

GRE is, however, a close ally of Hambros and shares a chairman in the person of Lord Hambros, while Sao Paulo has a longstanding shareholding alliance and is thought to be supportive.

Mr Mellon, whose company holds three per cent of Hambros, said that other shareholders his firm had contacted had responded positively.

Regent said last month that Hambros should return capital to shareholders by selling off its non-core assets, with the 31 per cent stake in Hambros Countrywide, the estate agency and financial services group, at the top of its disposal list.

Mr Mellon said that with a firm property market in the UK it was a good time to sell this business, and building societies in the UK would be the obvious choice as buyers.

IN BRIEF

• Superscape, the virtual reality group, saw its share price rocket by 162.5p to 565p following news of a deal with Microsoft. The deal involves the immediate use of Superscape's Web software in all of Microsoft's retail versions of its Internet Explorer Starter Kit. Microsoft will distribute the software to all new Windows 95 users. Superscape also reported an increase in half-year losses from £1.75m to £2.87m, and said full-year losses would be "consistent with plans to grow aggressively."

• Dealers expect shares in the Fitness First healthclub group to record a premium of at least 10p on the 80p flotation price when dealing on the Alternative Investment Market begin today. Fitness, founded in 1992, was valued at £22m by the private placing, which raised £8m.

• Avesco has acquired 49 per cent of Complete Communications, the TV production and post-production company for £713,350. The stake has been acquired by buying Blindlink, which holds three share stakes in Complete for three venture capitalists. Complete, without detailing figures, said it had returned to the black in the first nine months of this year after losing money in the whole of 1995.

• Shares in Wakebourne, the information technology services group, fell 4.5p to a five-year low of 16p after warning second-half results would fall well below expectations. Maintenance activities are being hit by aggressive price discounting by rivals. The CAD software divisions has also had a tough time although upon systems and cabling have done well.

• London and St Lawrence reported a rise in its net asset value from 187.74p to 192.42p in the year to September. Net revenue, after taxation, rose from £1.5m to £2.05m, giving earnings per share of 6.23p up from 5.96p. Total dividend is 6.24p.

• Bourne End Properties has sold its freehold interest in the Magnet store in Guildford for £4.15m to Harnsworth Pooled Property Unit Trust. The store is let on a lease expiring in 2014 at a passing rent of £285,750 a year.

• Eliza Tinsley plans to buy two engineering companies, Evenwood Engineering and GR Smithson, for up to £5.52m and raise £6.54m through a placing and open offer of shares at 110p each. Evenwood employs 170 staff and names Komatsu and JCB among its biggest customers for its fabricated assemblies and hydraulic tanks. Smithson has 190 employees, and makes medium weight pressings and welded sub-assemblies.

• Glenchewton exchanged contracts to sell the freehold of the Hinds Head pub in Bryn, Berkshire for £450,000 cash. It will take a 25-year lease on the pub at £45,000 a year, with an option to buy back the freehold following certain of the five-year rent reviews.

• Brands Hatch Leisure, the motorsport venue promoter, announced the appointment yesterday of Sir Rodney Walker as non-executive chairman. Sir Rodney is chairman of the Sports Council of Great Britain. He is also the non-executive chairman of the Yorkshire Cable Group, Wakefield Trinity rugby league club and West Yorkshire Broadcasting.

• Rolls-Royce is joining forces with Marubeni, the Japanese trading company, in a pact designed to boost sales opportunities for its commercial aero engines, especially in the Far East. The firms will co-operate on a range of activities, focusing on Rolls-Royce's Trent programme in which Marubeni becomes a risk and revenue sharing partner.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Henry Boot (Q)	75.5m (86.7m)	2.94m (2.71m)	7.2p (7.3p)	2.1p (1.95p)
AF Budge (Q)	10.2m (10.5m)	0.41m (0.80m)	0.06p (1.53p)	nil (nil)
Handerson Highland (Q)	- (1)	1.07m (4.82m)	3.57p (3.4p)	2p (2.5p)
AVIS Group (Q)	456m (451m)	115.5m (112.2m)	11.1p (10.2p)	2.82p (1)
The Rank (Q)	48.7m (41.5m)	0.50m (0.49m)	0.7p (0.53p)	0.5p (0.5p)
Wakebourne (Q)	15.1m (14.5m)	0.21m (-0.30m)	0.4p (-1.1p)	- (1)

(Q) - Full (A) - Interim



Quizzmaster Nicholas Parsons and Emma Chilvers

Parsons has just a minute for a quick bop

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

The link between celebrity Nicholas Parsons bopping in Stringfellow's nightclub and the vital subject of independent financial advice may not be immediately obvious. Let me explain.

Yesterday morning a throng of national press photographers were assembled at Peter Stringfellow's famous London club for the launch of the "Save smarter for a rave retirement" campaign by IFA Promotions.

Six specially hired pensioner "models" were raving on the dance floor when noted quiz show host Mr Parsons refused to take to the floor.

"I'll do anything," said the great man, "but I must make it clear that I'm not retired, and wouldn't want to give that impression."

Indeed not. Mr Parsons will celebrate his 69th birthday on Thursday as well as 50 years in show business, but there is no sign of him letting up. Disaster was averted by Emma Chilvers, a 26-year-old, doe-eyed PR hackette from Lansons, the agency which was organising the photocall. The resourceful Emma inveigled the still sprightly Parsons on to the dance floor for an impromptu jive.

The six disappointed pensioners were left to return to the office from where they

had been hired, at the bizarrely named Ugly Agency.

Reporting the seamy side of City life is never pleasant. It is only the wider ramifications of this story which persuaded me that, however distasteful, it must be told.

When Thistle Hotels completed its recent flotation, the team of Thistle executives, merchant bankers and PR spin doctors who organised it naturally decided to celebrate.

Following a night of debauch at the fashionable London club Annabel's in Berkeley Square, a PR executive who shall remain nameless (Nick Denton), from an agency that shall also remain anonymous (Shandwick), was seen by a colleague "on the streets of Soho wearing a Thistle Hotels bathrobe and brandishing a whip".

Apparently Merrill Lynch, one of the investment banks involved, had supplied a number of whips to the Thistle team, for reasons which this column has been so far unable to ascertain.

I would now strongly advise readers of a nervous disposition to avert their eyes and study the company results.

By about six in the morning, the party of eight then retired to a flat in Gloucester Road. It was at this point that Richard O'Brien, a corporate finance director at Baring's, allowed the others aside, entered the kitchen and proceeded to make what can only be described as "a rather tasty Spanish omelette" for breakfast.

A Spanish omelette. When will this Euro-federalist madness end?

Invesco, the fund management group that swallowed MIM, has appointed AD Frazier Jr as executive vice president and a member of the board. Charles W Brady chairman of Invesco, says Mr Frazier brings "outstanding management expertise and operational skills, demonstrated by his distinguished career in financial services and, most recently, his masterful oversight of the Centennial Celebration of the Olympic Games in Atlanta".

Having seen the games on TV, that's not an achievement I would have boasted about.

JD Sports, which makes replica football kits and sponsors Oldham Athletic, has made its two Manchester

founders rich with its £134m float. John Wardle and David Makin, who founded the business in Bury in 1981, will both make £14.5m out of the deal.

So are they happy? Mr Wardle, 52, a former fireman and MOD clerk, and Mr Makin, just 32, both looked glum yesterday as they explained the deal to the City. The reason is homesickness.

Mr Makin, who joined the business at 16, explains: "We've been in the City for four weeks and we're tired of it. We're looking forward to going back to Manchester and running the business."

Neville Buch, chairman of Blenheim, has made over £20m on the sale of his exhibitions business to Lord Hollick's United News and Media. So what's he going to do next?

"All my holidays this year have been trashed," says Mr Buch. "I spent my summer holidays sat on a boat in the middle of a Caribbean hurricane on the end of a phone."

Mr Buch says he would like to build up a new company when he returns from his post-sale break - "but it won't be in exhibitions. I've done that for 15 years".

John Willcock

sport

An old lady reborn in the pool of life

KEITH ELLIOTT
AT LARGE

Imagine you are 72 years old and heading rapidly for that plot in the cemetery at All Saint's Church, just down the road. Your life has been plagued by illness and serious operations. You live in a tiny terraced house in Cardiff with few possessions and no family except an ailing daughter and a couple of cats. Not much to live for, really, is there?

That's what Emily Godsall thought. "I was useless," she admits candidly. Almost a decade later, she looks like a cover model for *Glamorous Granny* magazine. She might even have trouble convincing bus drivers that she is entitled to concessionary fares. Her achievements have won her the 1996 Pharmacopoeia Senior Sports-woman of the Year title. And it's all down to swimming.

Not just a gentle paddle across the pool with a rubber ring, either. Emily, now 79, is rated among the top 10 in the world at both backstroke and breaststroke for her age group. She has twice swum a mile at charity events - pretty good considering that the old Emily couldn't even manage a wibble.

"I was terrible then," she recalls. "I was really weak, a little old lady with legs like matchsticks." She had never been well all her life, and had undergone eight operations for everything from heart disease to acute pancreatitis, from breast cancer to a double hiatus hernia.

They say that when you're down, along comes a thief to steal your purse. "If it had been myself, I wouldn't have bothered, but then my daughter was very poorly and I had to look after her," Emily said. So she took up swimming. "I had over-



Going to great lengths: The doctor gave me a check-up and said my pulse rate is 56, lower than Sebastian Coe, says Emily Godsall, aged 79

Photograph: Peter Jay

er been any good at sports, but I realised I needed to take up some form of exercise, and swimming was the only one I thought I could do. I couldn't swim a width when I started." She went along to the Empire Pool in Cardiff, very proud of her new swimming costume with a little skirt, and her decorative hat. "I had to look really hard to find one with blue and pink flowers on it. I didn't have any goggles; after all, I wasn't going to put my face in the water. The first thing I was told was to get rid of the awful costume and hat, and get some goggles."

The first few lessons took a great deal out of her. "I was hopelessly out of breath. I came home and went straight to bed because I was so tired." But she rapidly turned from a flapper to a fish. "Soon I could do about 50 metres. It just seemed to come naturally." It changed her too. "Instead of walking like a little old lady, I was standing more upright, and not getting out of breath."

Emily progressed so fast that she was entered in the Welsh Championships for her age group that year. It was the first competition of any sort that she had ever competed in.

"I couldn't dive then, and I wasn't very good at the turns, but I won the bronze. That was a real surprise. I was pleased not to be last."

A couple of months later, she travelled to the British Championships where she won a silver for backstroke, and a bronze for breaststroke. "I was almost living at the pool then, training five times a week and helping handicapped swimmers on Sundays." The following year, she broke the Welsh record for backstroke, a feat she has achieved on several occasions. In 1991 she took her first gold in the British

Championships at Leeds. She has now won 106 medals.

Last year she became the first Welsh person to win the annual Kia-Ora award for sporting achievement. It was a timely recognition of her success. In 1995 she won two golds at the GB Masters, and was chosen for the Welsh team for the 1996 World Championships in Sheffield, where she was placed in the top 10 in four events. Not bad for a woman who once had trouble walking to the bus stop.

Recently, she went to the doctor, worried about a lump growing on her chest. It turned

out to be pectoral muscle. "He gave me a check-up and said my pulse rate is 56, lower than Sebastian Coe," she says proudly. Emily is even convinced that she's getting faster.

"I would love to do more World Championships, but I could only compete this year because it was in Sheffield. For most competitions, I put away 20p pieces, but for that, I had to get a second mortgage on my house to pay for entry fees, travel, accommodation and swimsuits. I would love to take part in the European Championships next year in Prague, but the whole thing will cost

£500." To her, such an amount in one hit is as inconceivable as a Lottery win.

But money is far less important than the fact that Emily has discovered life. She is out of the house most days, and if she's not swimming, she's doing aquarobics, talking to groups about what she has done or studying for her time-keeping exam. She's even started tai chi. "Since I took up swimming, my life has never been better, and I've travelled all over the country. Nobody could have been in a worse state than I was. If I can do it, anyone can."

Riches seem beyond Smith

Equestrianism
GENEVEVE MURPHY

The problems that have sidelined Robert Smith's two best horses, Tees Hanauer and Orchos, could hardly have come at a more inopportune time.

Having won the Pulsar Grand Prix at Valkenswaard in the Netherlands during August, Smith will be jumping for a £400,000 bonus prize at the Monterey Horse Show, which begins today in Mexico. Were he to win it, he would be competing for a £1m jackpot in Luxembourg next year.

However, Smith, the 35-year-old son of Harvey, may find such riches beyond his reach, because of injury. Tees Hanauer, his winning mount in Valkenswaard, has damaged a suspensory ligament and Orchos has a badly bruised foot. So Smith will rely on Mighty Blue in Monterey. The horse is capable of winning smaller classes (he proved that point with a final-day victory at the recent Horse of the Year Show) but he would not be fancied to win a grand prix.

The four members of the British Olympic team - Geoff Billington, Nick Skelton and the two Whitaker brothers - will also be jumping in Mexico. Last year John Whitaker won the Pulsar Grand Prix there on Gramusch, who will again be one of his mounts this week.

The Pulsar Crown operates on a three-show cycle: Luxembourg, Valkenswaard and Monterey. The winner at any of these shows has the chance to collect a large bonus at the next two meetings - £400,000 for one more grand prix victory and £1m for winning three in a row.

John Whitaker will have had those tempting figures in mind this year when he went to Luxembourg, where he jumped a clear first round on Welham, the big class before having a single mistake in the next round to finish third. At Valkenswaard, where he still had a chance of the £400,000 bonus, he had exactly the same scores to finish 10th.

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL
LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

Top Fifty LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 6 OCTOBER

Rank	Manager	Team	Points
1	Mr S A Scott	Foreign Back Bone	306
2	Mr Steven Lawrence	Tees's Little Mermaids	301
3	Mr Steven Hart	Kees Cowboys	301
4	Mr C M Dore	The Dark's Diamonds	298
5	Mr David Edmondson	Edmo United	299
6	Mr Chris Murray	Brace's Bulls	298
7	Mr D J Robinson	Bank For Progress	298
8	Mr Steve Payne	Monderfield Turf	297
9	Mr Steve Skelton	Stevens' Stags	297
10	Dr Tom Boyle	Last Gasp Gulls	296
11	Mr G Lake	Barstall's Bulls	296
12	Mr Carl Britton	Maple Mousse E	295
13	Mr Steve Banton	Chateaus Utd	294
14	Mr Paul Davies	Chateaus Utd	294
15	Mr P S Srai	Chateaus Utd	294
16	Ms Lucy Creanor	Earlton	293
17	Mr Michael Dews	That's Handy Harry	293
18	Mr Jonathan Dore	Wimbledon Stupid Head	293
19	Mr Andrew Burman	Wimbledon Stupid Head	293
20	Mr P Srai	Jezventus	293
21	Mr Gerald Whitehead	Jezventus	293
22	Mr Peter Frankenthal	Fandino	290
23	Mr D J Robinson	Bank For Progress	290
24	Mr Steve Payne	Monderfield Turf	292
25	Mr Peter Frankenthal	Fandino	290
26	Mr P Srai	Dunedin is the Best	291
27	Mr John Perkins	Wimbledon Stupid Head	291
28	Mr R Jones	RJ3	291
29	Mr S King	Curlyon Crackers	291
30	Mr Paddy Falls	Curlyon Crackers	291
31	Mr Peter Frankenthal	Fandino	290
32	Mr D J Robinson	Bank For Progress	290
33	Mr R Jones	RJ4	289
34	Mr Jonathan Dore	Wimbledon Stupid Head	289
35	Ms Judy Wernick	The Velvet Alternative	288
36	Mr Alan Hogg	Up and Running	288
37	Mr Nigel Pain	Up and Running	288
38	Mr Ian Newson	Chateaus Utd	287
39	Mr Graham Murfit	Chateaus Utd	287
40	Mr John Dore	Wimbledon Stupid Head	287
41	Mr David Robinson	Double B	287
42	Mr Andrew Burman	Wimbledon Stupid Head	287
43	Mr Gary Hood	GNH2	286
44	Mr David R Baker	Baker Boys 5	286
45	Mr Grant Harrison	Grant's Team	286
46	Mr S A Scott	Steven Backbone	286

Transfer period starts next Wednesday

Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

Listed below you will find two scores. The Week 9 (Wk 9) column shows all points scored in matches played between Monday 7 October - Sunday 13 October inclusive. The Overall (Ov) column shows the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 13 October.

We are also publishing our Top 50 League table (see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 6 October. Results will be published every Wednesday in The

Independent. For the games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday. The overall Top 50 League table will be printed every Wednesday and again on Sunday. Terms and conditions are as previously published and are available upon request.

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the manager who has scored more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. With the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companions, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

PHILIPS
Let's make things better

TRANSFER PERIOD

Injury problems? Poor form? If your team is in need of changes, don't miss our transfer period which starts on 23 October and runs until 1 November. In this time you have one chance to change up to three of your current players. The new selections will start scoring for your team from 4 November. See next Wednesday's paper for full transfer details.

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 13 OCTOBER, WEEK 9 SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 7 - 13 OCTOBER

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS VALUE	Wk 9	Ov	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS VALUE	Wk 9	Ov
GOALKEEPERS											
300	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	479	Harkness	AKS	2	2	49
301	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	480	Neville (G)	AKS	2	2	49
302	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	481	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
303	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	482	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
304	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	483	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
305	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	484	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
306	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	485	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
307	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	486	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
308	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	487	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
309	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	488	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
310	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	489	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
311	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	490	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
312	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	491	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
313	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	492	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
314	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	493	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
315	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	494	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
316	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	495	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
317	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	496	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
318	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	497	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
319	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	498	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
320	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	499	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
321	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	500	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
322	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	501	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
323	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	502	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
324	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	503	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
325	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	504	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
326	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	505	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
327	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	506	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
328	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	507	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
329	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	508	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
330	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	509	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
331	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	510	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
332	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	511	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
333	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	512	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
334	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	513	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
335	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	514	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
336	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	515	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
337	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	516	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
338	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	517	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
339	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	518	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
340	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	519	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
341	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	520	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
342	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	521	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
343	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	522	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
344	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	523	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
345	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	524	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
346	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	525	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
347	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	526	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
348	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	527	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
349	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	528	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
350	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	529	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
351	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	530	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
352	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	531	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
353	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	532	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
354	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	533	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
355	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	534	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
356	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	535	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
357	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	536	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
358	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	537	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
359	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	538	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
360	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	539	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
361	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	540	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
362	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	541	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
363	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	542	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
364	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	543	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
365	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	544	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
366	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	545	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
367	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	546	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
368	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	547	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
369	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	548	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
370	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	549	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
371	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	550	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
372	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	551	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
373	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	552	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
374	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	553	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
375	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	554	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
376	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	555	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
377	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	556	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
378	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	557	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
379	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	558	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
380	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	559	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
381	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	560	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
382	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	561	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
383	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	562	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
384	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	563	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
385	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	564	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
386	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	565	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
387	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	566	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
388	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	567	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
389	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	568	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
390	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	569	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
391	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	570	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
392	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	571	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
393	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	572	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
394	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	573	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
395	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	574	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
396	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	575	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
397	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	576	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
398	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	577	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
399	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	578	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
400	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	579	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
401	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	580	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
402	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	581	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
403	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	582	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
404	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	583	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
405	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	584	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
406	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	585	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
407	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	586	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
408	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	587	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
409	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	588	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
410	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	589	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
411	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	590	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
412	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	591	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
413	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	592	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
414	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	593	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
415	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	594	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
416	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	595	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
417	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	596	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
418	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	597	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
419	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	598	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
420	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	599	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
421	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	600	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
422	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	601	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
423	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	602	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
424	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	603	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
425	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	604	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
426	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	605	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
427	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	606	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
428	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	607	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
429	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	608	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
430	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	609	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
431	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	610	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
432	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	611	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
433	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	612	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
434	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	613	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
435	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	614	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
436	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	615	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
437	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	616	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49
438	Seamus	AKS	2	2	49	617	Seamus	AKS	2		

sport

Players starting to see referees as paranoid policemen

When football supporters take their places to watch their heroes strut their stuff, not many of them appreciate that it is not only the players who are out there competing.

On the face of it, referees cannot win. If they don't please all of the people all of the time, they'll get stick. If they do, the best they can hope for are genuine well-meant handshakes from players as they head for the dressing-rooms.

However, most of the referees need to win – or to be more accurate, they need to get good grades from the assessor and the two clubs competing on the day. One or two will be completing their last year "on the list". If they follow trends established over the last couple of seasons, like Sinagra, they'll go out whistling rather than singing My Way.

A minority of the referees will be trying to maintain their status among the game's elite. The majority will be trying to prove themselves worthy of promotion into this elite. Mastering their trade is certainly a pursuit they all take very seriously, and some will harbour the

desire to tip David Elleray, the current "headmaster", from his seat.

There was a time when referees succeeded without seeming to try. They moved through the ranks developing a refereeing personality and style which worked despite what might now be seen as technical deficiencies. I'm sure the likes of Jim Finney, Jack Taylor, Neil Midgeley and many others would have found the current quest to standardise their behaviour, judgement and responses difficult to come to terms with.

Since Fifa, the governing body of world football, introduced through Uefa, the European governing body, its mandatory instructions relative to certain sections of Law 12, there has been an explosion in red and yellow cards. It has to be said, the product is better for this clean-up. Cynicism and violence cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

But are the measures too draconian? I think they are. I sense an almost religious fervour to clean things up, almost to sanitise the game. Are things really that bad? At the moment, I feel there's not



enough discrimination between what is ill-judged, careless and downright cynical or violent. Not enough importance is placed on trying to understand the motives of the player.

In the recent Arsenal and Sunderland game, Martin Scott deserved to go in my view, but did Paul Stewart? I am pleased to say that the referee concerned, Paul Dawson, now agrees. That's a step in the right direction. Can such judgements ever be so black and white?

A technical offence is not always intentional. It's one thing to know the laws, but to apply the laws effectively, you have to know the game.

England's game against Poland last week threw up an interesting comparison in standards. The official

Howard Wilkinson warns that managers, players and the men in the middle are moving apart and worries that good young officials may be lost to the game

in charge was Helmut Krug, one of Germany's top men. In a game where some Premiership referees might have been tempted to pop their cork, Herr Krug kept his bottle and was never too obvious – subtle rather than up front – and as a result the game flowed freely.

Knowing the game is largely a matter of experience and these days the trend is towards promoting even younger and therefore less experienced referees. In theory, the reasons are sound. The quicker you referee in the Premiership, the earlier you'll get on the Fifa list, which also means being longer on that list.

Mike Riley and Graham Barber, two very young and promising referees, were promoted to the Premiership after a couple of years apiece in the Football League. After four games each this season, they had respectively 21 and 25 yellow cards to their credit. In addition, Riley has two reds.

Riley refereed the Nottingham Forest-Middlesbrough game when nine players were booked and one sent off. This week Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, was fined £1,500, severely censured and warned to his future conduct following his outburst after this game.

John Kiddy from Sheffield, on the other hand, is a highly rated referee, but over 40 years old. His prospects for promotion to the Premiership could be significantly lower than younger candidates. With the best will in the world, experience can only come given the time to referee the number of games necessary to come to terms with and understand the intricacies of the modern game.

Seven managers charged with discipline is not good for the game, where the fault lies. Policemen guarding a referee's dressing-room does not reflect well on "family entertainment".

Matches needlessly reduced to fewer than 11-a-side are not what the customer pays to see – and the customer pays a lot these days.

There is a definite lack of communication, with players, managers and referees moving further apart rather than closer together. Managers and players need to be made fully aware of the huge pressure under which referees operate these days and the circumstances which create this pressure. At the moment, managers and players are starting to see the referees as some sort of bunch of paranoid policemen who assume every member of the public is a criminal bent on breaking the law.

All of this seems a far cry from the situation during the six years I had in non-League football where, mark my words, the fortitude, determination and commitment of referees was and is still tested to its limit. Even at that time, some referees had gone about as far as they could go.

For others, it was a final step in a very long, arduous ladder to their zenith, the old Football League. Now and again we'd get one or

two of the big boys, who'd got a free weekend. Now, they could be interesting. Humour breaks down many barriers.

I can still hear the dulcet tones now. "Come here, son, I'm having you. Don't worry, you're in good company. I booked Bobby Moore last week!"

The stories became legends as you got to know them personally. "Are you bleeding blind, ref?" my big centre-half politely enquired. "See the yellow thing up there, number five, it's millions of miles away and called the sun. I can see it from here, so how far do you want me to see?"

It would be a shame and a loss if the standardisations currently sought removed that sort of banter from the game.

Having said all that, would I be a referee? Would I hell! I don't think that will worry the assembled ranks of the gentlemen in black. What should worry all of us, though, is the possibility that there are increasing numbers of young men out there who, because of the hassle, think exactly the same.

Ajax look lost in an alien setting

Ian Ridley finds a strained welcome at the Amsterdam Arena, where Rangers boldly go searching for a win tonight

It homes into view amid farmland and aside office blocks south-east of the city and for a moment you really think they might have landed. The new Amsterdam Arena, host to Rangers in the Champions' League tonight, is indeed a futuristic mothership of a venue, but at the moment for Ajax, their opponents and occupants of this interplanetary craft, it is far from home.

This visitor yesterday began to feel like the increasingly frustrated Richard Dwyer in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Amid building workers still topping off (and popping off for a ciggie), security staff politely but firmly directed attempts to reach nerve centre – the 51,000-seat stadium itself and a view of the pitch. All enquiries were referred to offices on the fourth floor of a tower block 400 bleak and windswept yards away.

Ah, said a knowing local, that will be because they have taken so much criticism. Ajax supporters, used to the intensity of the old 20,000-capacity De Meester, are having trouble adapting to the less atmospheric ArenaA (probably spelled so because it offers neat opportunities for logo designers) while the team are struggling to perform on a pitch still bedding in. Like themselves, in fact.

For all that, the ArenaA is a remarkable looking construc-

tion, its most innovative feature a retractable roof – in 30 minutes, is the claim – that permits indoor concerts and the like. Car parking takes up the first two floors, with the pitch laid out on the third. Naturally, food outlets and other chances to spend money are copious.

That said, season ticket prices are remarkably cheap, with a seat on the half-way line at about £250 for the year. With a lowest price of £100, it puts the Premiership to shame. Costing £70m, the stadium has taken three years to complete and access via motorways and trains is excellent. It is about 12 kilometres from the centre of Amsterdam and only 30 from Utrecht, but then everything in this delightfully open and manageable country seems to be about 30 kilometres from Utrecht.

The stadium was opened two months ago with Ajax, only minor shareholders though the regular attraction, losing 3-0 to Milan as a sign of things to come. In six competitive games since, the pitch has cut up too easily and turf is relaid almost daily.

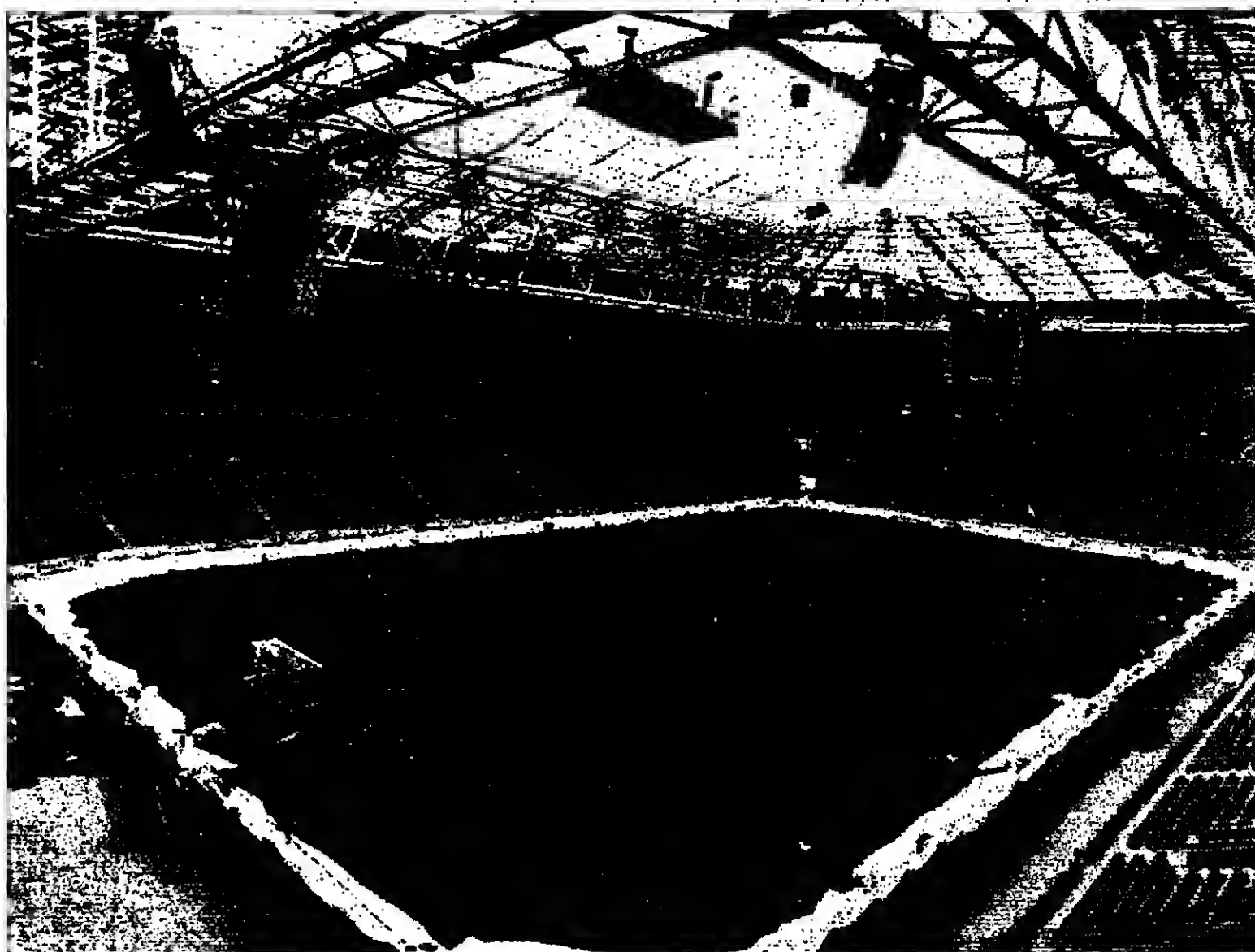
The biggest critic has been the Ajax coach, Louis van Gaal, whose passing team needs a level, rather than divot-pocked, playing surface. "Too soft underneath," said the well known Agronomist of Old Amsterdam.

"In the old place you could smell football everywhere you went. You can't here," said Van Gaal, who has announced his possibly related resignation from the club at the end of the season. And, from the outside yesterday, you knew what he meant.

Actually, Ajax's more significant dilemmas have been more to do with the new problems presented by the Bosman ruling and the age-old one of injury. Last summer Fritsdi George Nwankwo Kanu – now sadly out of the game with a heart problem – Edgar Davids and Michael Reiziger departed as the team which won the European Cup last year and was beaten by Juventus in this year's final drifted apart.

To those losses, add long-term injuries to Patrick Kluivert, Danny Blind and Peter Heerstra and a shorter-term calf strain to Jari Litmanen, which prevents his appearance tonight, and the reasons for Ajax's fall from grace become apparent.

They are an unheard of sixth in the Dutch League, seven points behind the leaders Feyenoord after 10 games. In the Champions' League, a business as usual 1-0 win in Anvers was followed by a 0-1 defeat in the ArenaA by Grasshopper of Zurich, fast becoming this season's surprise packet. Kluiv-



The 51,000-seated Amsterdam ArenaA where Ajax play host to Rangers in the Champions' League tonight

Photograph: Allsport

ert's replacement, the Nigerian Tijani Babangida, has yet to score a goal.

"They are still an impressive side," says the Rangers manager, Walter Smith. "I don't think they are in turmoil as some are suggesting." Perhaps

not, but his team, who have lost both their matches to Grasshopper and Anvers, could hardly have dared hope when the draw was made to find them in such disarray in what will be a make or break contest for the Scots.

Not that they themselves are untroubled by injury. The most worrying is the damaged hip of their goalkeeper Andy Goram, which will be tested this morning, while in attack they are looking thin. Smith may pair the German Jorge Alberiz with

Brian Laudrup. Ally McCoist and Gordon Durie are ruled out and the Dutchman formerly with Ajax, Peter Van Vossen, is doubtful.

The two teams will barely resemble what they might be and the same can be said of the set-

ting; yes, Jim, but is it football as we know it? Responding of a venue has always been part of playing in Europe and whichever side does so the better tonight will be crucial. We hope to bring you an internal report tomorrow.

Antic primed to atone for past

Raddy Antic, the Atletico Madrid coach, will be hoping to banish the memory of one of the most painful episodes in the club's history when his side met Borussia Dortmund in tonight's Champions' League fixture.

Atletico came close to winning the European Cup final in 1974, the last time they met a German side in the premier competition. But Bayern Munich scored a late equaliser, and Franz Beckenbauer's side went on to win the replay 4-0.

It was a heavy blow for Atletico, who have struggled to escape the shadow of their neighbours, Real, the winners of a record six European Cups.

Antic, himself a former Real coach, guided Atletico to their first domestic league and cup double last season. Few Spaniards would be surprised to see the Serbian take his

team all the way to the final after a fine Champions' League debut in Group B. Atletico have the best record of any side in the competition after beating the former champions Steaua Bucharest 4-0 and winning 4-1 at Poland's Widzew Lodz.

However, Borussia Dortmund have also beaten both Steaua and Widzew and will provide the toughest opposition in the group for Atletico.

Injury deprives Dortmund of their influential sweeper, Matthias Sammer, the midfielder Andreas Muller and defender Rene Schneider, all Germany internationals. But the Brazilian defender Julio Cesar is recovering from a muscle injury and is likely to play. Dortmund beat Duisburg 2-0 in the Bundesliga last Saturday but they are not performing well in midfield or attack.

"We're not going to Madrid as favourites but we don't want to lose there either," the coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, said. "We have to live with lots of injuries but it gives the replacements a chance to force their way in."

Dortmund may draw strength from the past, having beaten Atletico in the quarter-finals of the European Cup-Winners' Cup on their way to winning the trophy in the 1965/66 season.

Atletico's fine European form has contrasted with some poor performances at home. The Madrid club are already six points adrift of the leaders, Barcelona, after seven league games, largely thanks to the absence of the injured Jose Luis Caminero, who missed the Borussia match with a muscle strain.

To make matters worse even Antic himself is injured. The Ser-

bian pulled up in training on Sunday after aggravating an Achilles tendon injury which had lingered on from his time as a player and he will have to curb his animated topline sorties.

However, Antic will be cheered by the reappearance of the striker Kiko Narvaez, who sat out Saturday's 2-2 draw with Real Betis. "It's an important game, which could open the way to the quarter-finals," Kiko said.

The match should fill Atletico's Vicente Calderon stadium for the first time this season. The capacity has been reduced by 6,000 to just under 50,000, because of engineering works.

Atletico Madrid (probable) v Borussia Dortmund, European Cup Champions' League, Madrid, tonight 8pm. Dwyer, Solari, Garcia, Sanchez, Sola, Simeone, Pardo, Narvaez, Etxebarria.

Borussia Dortmund (probable) v Atletico Madrid, Champions' League, Dortmund, tonight 8pm. Brest, Zorn, Tretschok, Henrich, Ruten, Chrupala.

Apologetic Bosnich 'must grow up'

Aston Villa's assistant manager, Allan Evans, suggested yesterday that the club's goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich, has no problems that maturity would not cure.

Bosnich is on a Football Association charge after his "joke" Nazi-style salute to Tottenham fans on Saturday after Spurs supporters had taunted him over his collision with Jürgen Klinsmann two seasons ago.

This Saturday, his sense of humour will no doubt be tested again during the visit to Villa Park of Leeds, whose fans will recall his dismissal late in a Premiership game at Elland Road 18 months ago, when Villa went on to lose.

"He's had problems with the Leeds crowd in the past," Evans said. "He was sent off there for wasting time and winding people up. He's been in the wrong a few times and he must start to grow up."

"As long as he learns from the White Hart Lane experience, it's OK. We believe he made a genuine mistake and I am sure the manager, Brian Little, intends to pick him for Saturday," Bosnich, who has profusely

apologised for the salute, describing it as a joke, is sure to be selected but Little will make changes for the visit of George Graham's Leeds side as he looks to end a sequence without a win stretching back to 4 September.

Little said: "You have to be concerned when you go seven matches without a victory and there will be changes."

One piece of good news for Little is that Gareth Southgate is likely to have recovered from the ankle injury he suffered while playing for Eoghan Lafferty against Poland last Wednesday.

Middlesbrough's manager, Bryan Robson, might have been frustrated by his side's 2-2 draw against 10-man Sunderland on Monday, but he took consolation from Fabrizio Ravanelli breaking his goal drought away from the Riverside Stadium.

"He's so single-minded about scoring goals and there's no reason why he can't carry on scoring," Robson said of the Italian, who has scored 11 times this season. "It's nice that he's got off the mark in an away game, but I don't think it was praying on his mind that he hadn't scored away from home."

Struggling Milan seek respite

Milan, who have been plagued by poor form and injuries so far this season, will be hoping for another successful trip to Scandinavia when they play Gothenburg in the European Champions' League today.

Milan beat Rosenborg 4-1 in Norway last month, with Marco Simone scoring a hat-trick in Trondheim and George Weah getting the other goal.

Simone missed the 3-0 defeat at Roma in Serie A on Saturday with an injury, but he returns to partner Weah in attack as Milan look for a second victory in Group D.

Gothenburg confirmed their domination of Swedish football at the weekend by winning their fourth successive league title with two matches to spare. Andreas Andersson and Stefan Pettersson scored two goals

each in a 6-0 away victory at Trelleborg, which keeps Gothenburg in next season's Champions' League. However, they have had a miserable time this season, losing to Rosenborg and Porto.

Milan's coach, Oscar Tabarez, has been forced to make sweeping changes to his team. Edgar Davids, Dejan Savicevic and Stefano Eranio are all injured and Pietro Vierchowid is cup-tied.

Franco Baresi, who played his first game in over six weeks on Saturday, is expected to play against Gothenburg despite being less than 100 per cent fit. To provide extra cover for Baresi, Tabarez may move Marcel Desailly back to central defence in place of the out-of-form Alessandro Costacurta.

Two younger members of

the squad, Massimo Ambrosini, 19, and Tomas Locatelli, 20, are expected to play in midfield alongside Demetrio Albertini and Zvonimir Boban.

Boban, who was suspended on Saturday, said he hoped the defeat would spur the side on. "It [the defeat by Roma] wasn't nice to look at, not at all," he said. We had better show some character and react."

Boban's sentiments were shared by Costacurta, who said: "Thank goodness we now have a cup match. I don't know what exactly is happening at the moment. We're conceding goals that, if not inexcusable, are at least worrying."

Gothenburg (probable) v Milan, Champions' League, Gothenburg, tonight 8pm. Andersson, Pettersson, Bjornqvist, Ponnert, Andersson, Milner, Zorn, Tretschok, Henrich, Ruten, Chrupala.

Paris St-Germain, the bolders, will be without Leonardo for the away leg against Galatasaray in the second round of the European Cup-Winners' Cup tomorrow.

Leonardo, whose seven goals and incisive midfield play have helped PSG establish a seven-point lead in the French First Division, has been called up by Mario Zagallo to play in Brazil's friendly at home to Lithuania.

His team-mate Vincent Guerin said: "We'll surely miss him. But we have enough good players to manage without him."

PSG's manager, Ricardo, a fellow Brazilian, said: "His absence is serious but I have a good squad and I'm not worried."

Laurent Fournier will probably move into Leonardo's attacking midfield role, with Jose Cobos coming into the defence.

Tbilisi take a narrow lead

Kakhi Gogichaishvili scored from a penalty in the 28th minute to give Dynamo Tbilisi a 1-0 victory over Boavista in their second-round, first leg Uefa Cup game yesterday in Georgia.

Tbilisi were on top throughout the first half without making their superiority count. The breakthrough came when their defender Gocha Jamarulidze raced forward and was pulled down by a Boavista defender to give Gogichaishvili his opportunity.

The Portuguese came into the match more in the second half, but Tbilisi's goalkeeper,

Irakli Zoidze, made several crucial saves to delight the 50,000 crowd.

Neptun Bajko resigned as coach of the Albanian national team yesterday in the wake of last week's 3-0 home defeat by Portugal in a World Cup qualifier. Bajko, who had coached the team since August 1994, said he quit because his players had refused to follow his tactics in the Group Nine match in Tirana last Wednesday. The Albanian FA said it had not yet appointed a replacement but denied reports that a foreign coach was being sought.



Peace, love, flowers.



Beer.



Dr. J. L. J. J. J.

SPORT

'But are the measures too Draconian? I think they are. I sense an almost religious fervour to clean things up, almost to sanitise the game. Are things really that bad?'
Howard Wilkinson on the refereeing revolution

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Sport is Murdoch's 'battering ram' for pay TV

Sports politics

ROBERT MILLIKEN
reports from Sydney

Rupert Murdoch yesterday signalled his plan to take an even more aggressive approach towards buying television rights for leading sports when he announced that he intended to use sport as a "battering ram" for the expansion of his global pay television network.

He told the annual meeting in Adelaide of News Corporation, of which he is chairman and chief executive: "Sport absolutely overpowers film and everything else in the entertainment genre."

"Football, of all sports, is number one. Look at what we have done in Britain with our Premier League soccer, and now with the rugby union and rugby league in the United Kingdom as well. We expect the next three World Cups will have a significant place on our platforms. Sport will remain very important and we will be investing in and acquiring long-term rights."

Murdoch was speaking with the assurance of someone whose risk-taking has proved that sports, along with big Hollywood movies, are the two biggest money spinners underwriting his pay television ventures. In Britain, his acquisition

of Premier League has been crucial in turning BSkyB into one of News Corporation's most booming businesses (a fact underlined when BSkyB shares rose 18p to 676.5p yesterday, increasing its stock market value to £11.64bn).

In the United States, he has a lucrative contract with the National Football League, showing many of the best American football games on Fox Television, his free-to-air network. "Fox has been very much involved, or will be involved in the next week, in the finals of the World Baseball Series, for which we expect great ratings," he said yesterday.

Murdoch also made it clear

that he would be using sport as a bridgehead to launch American Sky Broadcasting, his new pay television venture in the United States in partnership with MCI Communications, the giant telecommunications company. American Sky will have more than 200 channels and will be launched late next year.

The Murdoch obsession with sport extends to Asia as well, where his Star satellite network stretches from China to India. "[There is] one development which is very pleasing in our sports programming in India, which was beginning to get very expensive," Murdoch said. "We have now formed a partnership with our former sports pro-

gramming competitor, ESPN of the United States.

"We have the long-term rights in most countries to major sporting events and we will be doing in Asia what we intend to do elsewhere in the world, that is, use sports as a 'battering ram' and a lead offering in all our pay television operations."

It was in Australia where Murdoch's battering ram almost ended as a pile of splinters in his launch of FoxTel, his pay television venture there which News Corporation runs in partnership with Telstra, the state-owned telecommunications company. Absolutely crucial to FoxTel's success was Murdoch's attempt to wrench control of rug-

by league, one of the most popular sports in Australia, from the game's established authorities and form his own Super League of international competition with Britain and New Zealand.

Speakeasted by Leighton Murdoch, his son and apparent heir, and Ken Cowley, his most trusted Australian lieutenant, Murdoch's organisation poured more than A\$500m (£150m) into launching Super League, only to see it crushed by a Federal Court ruling last year that banned Super League from starting before the end of the decade.

The legal challenge came from the Australian Rugby League, the official body, supported by Optus Vision, FoxTel's

rival cable TV company that had exclusive pay TV rights to rugby league. Korry Packer, Murdoch's rival, is a partner in Optus Vision. The ruling would have left FoxTel with no leading winter sport, and its future in doubt.

Ten days ago, an appeal court delivered a stunning victory to Mr Murdoch when it overturned the earlier decision, ruled that "loyalty agreements" between players and the Australian Rugby League were null and void and allowed Super League to start from next year.

Although the official game plans a further appeal to the High Court, Murdoch is now in a perfect position to call the shots over the future of rugby



Murdoch: Business booming

league. No one seriously believes that Australia can sustain two rival competitions and a merger, on Murdoch's terms, seems on the cards.

United face anxious wait for Pallister

Football

GLENN MOORE
reports from Istanbul

Manchester United tonight extend their European odyssey into Asia as they embark upon the crucial stage of their Champions' League campaign.

They play the Turkish champions, Fenerbahce, who are based across the Bosphorus, the strait which divides European Turkey from its much larger Asian part. It is United's first visit in 40 years in Europe.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, believes the two matches with Fenerbahce will decide who qualifies from Group C behind the favourites, Juventus. The return is in a fortnight in Manchester.

"I'll be satisfied with a point," Ferguson said yesterday, "something to take back to Old Trafford where our European record is fantastic."

The Turkish champions are aware of that. Having narrowly lost at home to Juventus, and drawn away to the group's weakest team, Rapid Vienna, they have two points less than United. Vefa Kuguk, their vice-president, admitted: "If we don't win we are finished."

Ferguson will not know his team until this morning when he discovers how a quintet of players have reacted to last night's training session. Gary Pallister, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Jordi Cruyff and David May are all

doubts, with Pallister the main concern.

If he is not fit, May and Ronnie Johnsen will continue the partnership which denied Liverpool. If he is, May may be unlucky although Johnsen could play in midfield.

Though fit, Eric Cantona is another concern. The Frenchman confessed that he had "forgotten he could play as badly" as he did against Liverpool. "It has been a difficult week for him," Ferguson said. "He's been training on his own while the others [10 players] have been on international duty or injured. It cannot have been easy for him, he is a player who needs to train." Ferguson added: "It doesn't worry me."

Nevertheless, it seems every time United play in Europe one writes "Cantona is yet to prove himself in Europe". Apart from one performance for Leeds against Stuttgart it remains true.

Of his younger players Ferguson said: "They were overawed by Juventus but they started to express themselves in the second half. I expect them to do that tomorrow. It was not a crime but they won't let me down again."

Fenerbahce, coached by Sebastian Lazaroni, once manager of Brazil, have their own mercurial talents, notably Emil Kostadinov. His last-minute goal denied France, and Cantona, a place in the 1994 World

Cup finals. He has been less effective since, fitting from club to club and, though he scored against Maccabi Tel Aviv in the preliminary round, he was then sent off. He returns from suspension tonight to partner the prolific Bosnian, Elvir Bolic.

In midfield is Jay-Jay Okocha, the gifted young Nigerian, while his Olympic gold-medal winning team-mate, Uche Okechukwu, partners Denmark's Jes Høgh at the back. A clutch of Turkish internationals, including the promising goalkeeper Reşat Rüştü, make up the side.

An angry Høgh yesterday denied comments attributed to him in an English Sunday tabloid suggesting United, especially his international team-mate Peter Schmeichel, had reason to fear Istanbul. "The reporter made it all up," Høgh said.

Indeed, contrary to reports elsewhere yesterday, United's reception in this city of minarets and mosques has been warm in the nicest sense. "There have been no problems at all," Ferguson said.

The match is a 26,000 sell-out with less than 300 of those being from Manchester. One unofficial group of 55 was expected in last night containing five known hooligans.

With the help of English police "spotters" Turkish officials were hoping to deport them immediately they arrived at the airport.



Alex Ferguson fields questions yesterday as his team prepares for tonight's Champions' League game in Istanbul. Photograph: Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

The referee, Manuel Diaz Vega, controlled England's opening Euro 96 game with Switzerland. He also sent off Paul Gascoigne, deservedly, in

Dortmund in last year's Champions' League. Though regarded as a showman in his native Spain he is not easily intimidated in Europe.

While United have never played Fenerbahce before, their neighbours, City, have. Manchester City's only European Cup entry, 28 years ago, ended

at Fenerbahce's hands. Aston Villa and Arsenal have since knocked Fenerbahce out in Europe without conceding a goal. Tonight, on the pitch where

Graeme Souness, infamously and provocatively, planted a Galatasaray flag last season, United will be aiming to make their own mark.

Sunderland will carry on battling for success

Kevin Ball insists Sunderland are not worried about their disciplinary difficulties with Premier League referees despite an early-season rash of red cards.

Richard Ord became Sunderland's fourth sending-off of the season when he stamped on the England striker Nick Barry during last night's 2-2 draw against Middlesbrough at Roker Park.

Ord, who was also dismissed at Derby last month, is in trouble with the Football Association and his manager, Peter Reid, with a three-match ban for violent conduct and a hefty club fine the likely outcome.

Two other Sunderland players have also been sent off so far this season, but Ball makes no apology for the fierce commitment which he believes is Sunderland's greatest strength. "This side's got a tremendous will to win and we're going to

go out and battle away in every game," Ball said. "And if that means you're walking a bit of a tightrope with certain referees, so be it."

"Last year we were a committed side. That's what won us the championship. We went out in every game and we went out with the will to win. In this league you've got to combine that commitment with ability and I think we do that."

Ord's dismissal was Sunderland's third in two games with Martin Scott and Paul Stewart shown the red card during the 2-0 defeat at Arsenal, although Stewart's dismissal for handball has since been overturned, with the referee Paul Darsoo admitting he was mistaken.

Reid has hinted that he will come down heavily on Ord, who had to sit out the match at Highbury because he was serving a suspension from his sending-off

at Derby, and now has another ban looming.

The final Wear-Tees derby at Roker Park ahead of Sunderland's move to a new stadium at Wearmouth provided an entertaining match for the Sky TV cameras and an answer to the critics who had accused Reid's goal-shy team of being negative.

But a defiant Ball insists that the "spoilers" tag has not bothered the players, who are fully focused on Premiership survival.

"We're not too fussed about whether people think we're entertaining or not," he said. "Our aim is to go out and win games and get points, and if people don't think we're entertaining that's up to them."

"We're not really bothered about the doubters. We're confident in our ability and we just go about doing our job. People can say and do what they want."

Tomba will miss the opening event of World Cup season

Skiing

Alberto Tomba, returning to a favourite theme, was quoted yesterday as saying that the Alpine World Cup circuit should be scrapped.

Italian newspapers also quoted the world and Olympic champion as saying that he would skip the season's opening race in Austria and might also decide against travelling to the United States but would decide nearer the date.

"I have always said that the classics, the World Champi-

onships and the Olympics were enough," the daily *Gazzetta dello Sport* quoted Tomba as telling reporters at an awards ceremony in the northern town of Biella on Monday.

Tomba, who said earlier this year that he had considered retiring after winning two gold medals at the Sierra Nevada World Championships in February, has changed his training schedule and reduced his workload. "I will decide later whether to start the season in the United States or at Madonna di Campiglio," said Tomba, who has already committed

himself to competing in the 1997 World Championships in the Italian resort of Sestriere.

"I have done half as much training on snow as last year so I may delay my start as a result. I will do some trials at the end of the month to see how the motor is working," he said. "At the moment I should be about ready. I am probably faster but a bit less powerful."

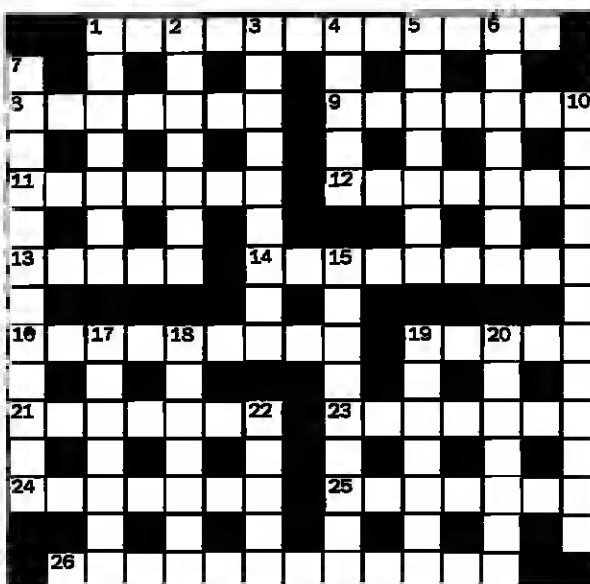
The season starts in Sölden, Austria on 26-27 October and then moves to Park City, Utah on 21 November. Madonna di Campiglio hosts a race on 17 December.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3119, Wednesday 16 October

By Aquila

Thursday's Solution



ALBERT OVERSTAY
CRAPE TAIL
CHAINS AW FOCUS
U V D L M I W
RAGGUS BREMIE
A R M E U G U E
GOAL PRIMROSE
Y S N E E
COHERENT PYREX
F U T E L E
DUNLINE RAILING
S U B E C U E
SHOWS CANTANES
I O E T I N I
LITREINIS RIERIRIS

ACROSS

- Admirable type Harrow is turning out (12)
- School dictionary in near-ruin (7)
- Love-pot thickening in the kitchen (7)
- Northern climbing starting to develop (7)
- Standing in Piccadilly, for example (7)
- Lines often heard in Scotland? (5)
- Show allergy to insects, using substances in chemical tests (9)
- Hard astero - it's a new way! (9)
- Excited male sheep? (3,2)
- Non-belligerent, with stick not in use? (7)
- Formula One heartless in Turin, possibly (7)
- Orkney-designed town on the Hudson River (7)

DOWN

- As a poet, I am changing a point in speech (7)
- Direct, intense sort of creator (12)
- Papers higher in price? It's simply an exercise! (5,2)
- Never getting on, seemingly? (7)
- Sonata air broadcast in hospitals (9)
- County flags (5)
- Sturdy small part and apply again (7)
- Sacking an old soldier (7)
- Photograph of Sheerness? (12)
- London Pride is uniquely charming! (4-2-6)
- Radio-sets tuned for space-travellers (9)
- He turns his nose up at stewed prunes, right? (7)

- Eddy joins cricket-side as a medic (7)
- Labour of carrying in harvest time? (7)
- Teaching out in it, unusually (7)
- Long Island's shorter yarn (5)